

THRILLING WONDER STORIES

15¢

OCT.

BUY WAR BONDS
AND STAMPS
FOR VICTORY!



JESSIFER
RIDES AGAIN

A Rollicking
Novelet of
the Future

By NELSON
S. BOND

FEATURING

THROUGH
INVISIBLE
BARRIERS

An Amazing Complete Novel
EDMOND HAMILTON

A THRILLING
PUBLICATION



IS GOD DEAD?

NO—God is not dead. The Power of God is a completely unknown factor on the earth—that's all. When the fullness of the scintillating beauty of the Power of God is made known to humanity, such world-desolators as Tojo and Schickelgruber will vanish as the morning mists before the rising sun.

The "Psychiana" Movement is bringing to Americans everywhere, the plain simple facts of God. We have discovered that the invisible Power of God is the most staggeringly dynamic Power in existence. What men and women can do with the Power of God in their lives beggars description. The pity of it all is that no idea or theory of God advanced to date has been able to disclose the actual, literal Power of God to humanity. That revela-

tion is now coming. We brought knowledge of the Power of God to humanity some fifteen years ago. Naturally, what has happened in the lives of those who found and use this staggering Power of God is beyond description.

We want you too, to know the amazing, invisible Power which exists here and now for YOUR use. So we have prepared two booklets which will be sent you without charge on receipt of your name and address. Try and imagine what your life would be if you knew that you had, at your instant disposal, ALL THE POWER OF GOD. Well you can have. The Power exists. It is free for all. So send us your name and address now, and we will send you the two free booklets by return mail. The address is "Psychiana" Inc. Dept. 64, Moscow, Idaho.



AN ASTOUNDING PROPHECY



Ten years ago Dr Robinson predicted this war. He told what nations would be lined up against other nations. He predicted the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The prophecy came true in a remarkable manner. NOW—he makes another astounding prophecy. How long will the war last? Which side will be victorious? How will Hitler and Hirohito meet their doom? Will Tokyo go up in flames? A FREE COPY of the amazing prophecy will be included if you mail your request—NOW. We cannot promise to repeat this offer. SO SEND NOW. You might just as well begin to use the invisible superhuman Power of God right tonight—right in your own home. The address again is "Psychiana" Inc. Dept. 64, Moscow, Idaho. Copyright 1942 "Psychiana" Inc.

Men Wanted NOW for all Skilled Jobs

THESE QUICK TRAINING BOOKS ARE SHIPPED FREE

for Examination. Get ahead faster. Use this quick reference way to find the facts on hundreds of important subjects. The jiffy index helps you to find out what you need to know in a hurry. Machinists, Toolmakers, Draftsmen, Automobile Mechanics, Aviation Employees, Diesel Engineers, and men in almost any other similar field can profit by having these books. Remember, any set will be sent to you free for examination. Just send the coupon.



MODERN SHOP PRACTICE

8 Big Books. 3,000 pages with nearly 3,000 illustrations which cover tool making, pattern making, foundry work, mechanical drawing, forging, machine shop practices and management, and hundreds of other subjects. This set, "Modern Shop Practice," will give any mechanic who uses them an advantage over untrained men. With each set we will include extra, a big binder of nearly 800 pages with hundreds of original shop tickets and 1,200 illustrations which show step by step how to set up and run almost any kind of a job. These are in addition to the 8 big books pictured above. **Total price only \$34.80. Sent on trial.**



AUTOMOBILE ENGINEERING

Brand New Set 6 Volumes. Whether you are a mechanic or helper, expert or apprentice, auto owner or driver, you will find great value in these auto books (19th edition) which tell you step by step how to make difficult repairs. 2,500 pages. 2,000 illustrations. Marine engines, aviation motors, Diesel engines, wiring diagrams included. **Total price only \$24.80. Sent on trial.**



DRAFTING

For Beginners or Experts in Machine Trades. Written so you can understand every word, by well-known engineers. De Luxe modernistic, washable cloth binding, over 1,600 pages, hundreds of blueprints, charts and diagrams; prepares you for a good drafting job in mechanical lines. **Total price for complete set \$19.80. Sent on trial.**

ELECTRICITY 10 Volumes

This new seventeenth edition of **Applied Electricity** has over 3,000 pages, hundreds of illustrations. Dynamos, motors, power stations, radio, television and many, many other subjects all covered. **Total price only \$29.80. Sent on trial.**



AVIATION

6 Volumes. Aircraft engines, Blueprint reading, Aerial photography, a complete encyclopedia. **Total Price \$19.80.**

DIESEL ENGINEERING

6 Volumes. Over 2,500 Pages. Hundreds of illustrations. **Total Price \$24.80.**

HEATING & VENTILATING

INCLUDING AIR CONDITIONING
6 Volumes. 2,000 Pages. 800 illustrations. **Total Price \$24.80.**

BUILDING, ESTIMATING AND CONTRACTING



9 Volumes. This new edition should make it easy for any carpenter to become a contractor. Invaluable to builders. Roof framing, steel square, architectural drawing and design, estimating, painting and decorating, heating, building, contracting, concrete forms, and many other subjects well covered. **Total price \$29.80. Sent on trial.**

ANY SET SHIPPED FREE!

For Examination. All you need do to get a set of volumes, "Modern Shop Practice" 8 volumes plus binder, "Applied Electricity" 10 volumes, "Automobile Engineering" 6 volumes, "Building, Estimating and Contracting" 9 volumes, "Heating-Ventilating" 6 volumes, "Diesel Engineering" 6 volumes, "Aviation" 6 volumes, for free examination is to send in the coupon. The books will be sent promptly. You pay the delivery charges only. Keep them for 10 days. If not satisfied, send them back and you will owe us nothing. If satisfied, send only \$2.00 in 10 days and then \$3.00 a month until the total price shown is paid. There is no further obligation.

American Technical Society, Vocational Publishers, Since 1898
Drexel at 58th Street, Chicago, Illinois Dept. X749

=====SEND THIS COUPON TODAY=====

AMERICAN TECHNICAL SOCIETY, Dept. X749
Drexel at 58th Street, Chicago, Illinois

Send for 10 days free use the cyclopedia which I list here.

Put name of set here

I will pay the delivery charges only, and if fully satisfied, will send you \$2.00 in 10 days and then \$3.00 a month until the total price of is paid. If I return the books in 10 days I will owe you nothing. You are to include a year's consulting privileges with your engineers without extra charge.

Name.....

Address.....

City..... State.....

Please attach a letter stating age, occupation and name and address of employer and at least one business man as a reference.

SCIENTIFICTION'S LEADING MAGAZINE

THRILLING WONDER STORIES



The Magazine of Prophetic Fiction

Vol. XXIII, No. 1
October, 1942

Next Issue



THE ETHER ROBOTS

A Complete John Carstairs Novel

By

FRANK BELKNAP LONG

•

STORM IN SPACE

An Amazing Novelet

By

ROSS ROCKLYNNE

•

TUBBY—TIME TRAVELER

A Humorous Story

By

RAY CUMMINGS

•

Plus Many Others

COMPLETE SCIENTIFICTION NOVEL THROUGH INVISIBLE BARRIERS

By EDMOND HAMILTON

Doctor Percival Withers, the Caspar Milquetoast of Physics, Asserts Himself with an Atomic Vengeance When Dastardly Foreign Agents Plot Death to the United Nations!..... 15

A Complete Novelet

JESSIFER RIDES AGAIN..... Nelson S. Bond 56
The System's Most Unpredictable Robot Pins Back the Ears of a Cruel Space Pirate!

Thrilling Short Stories

TIME TO REGRET..... Wilm Carver 71
A Prize-winning Amateur Contest Story.
THE MOLECULE MONSTERS..... Oscar J. Friend 77
Dr. Singer's Brain Children Come Home to Roost.
CONQUEST..... Joseph Gilbert 87
The Vilest Schemes of Men Turn to Ashes.
THE HAZING..... Isaac Azimov 89
Arcturian University Men Run Into Galactic Interference.
DOUBLE OR NOTHING..... Eando Binder 104
Jos Lake Combats a Cold-blooded Space Robber.

Special Feature

LILLIPUT IN EQUUSIA..... Richard Tooker 98
The Little Horses of the Grand Canyon.

Other Interesting Features

SCIENTIFACTS..... Oddities 53
HEADLINERS IN THE NEXT ISSUE..... Announcements 86
LOOKING FORWARD..... Science Fiction League 102
THE READER SPEAKS..... Sergeant Saturn 114
THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY..... Authors' Letters 122

ON THE COVER: Painting by Earle Bergey depicts a scene from Oscar J. Friend's story, THE MOLECULE MONSTERS

Published every other month by BETTER PUBLICATIONS, INC., 10 East 40th Street, New York, N. Y., N. L. Pines, President. Copyright, 1942, by Better Publications, Inc. Yearly 90c (six issues), single copies, 15c. Foreign and Canadian, postage extra. Entered as second-class matter May 21, 1936, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Names of all characters used in stories and semi-fiction articles are fictitious. If a name of any living person or existing institution is used, it is a coincidence.

Manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes, and are submitted at the author's risk.

PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

Read our Companion Magazines: STARTLING STORIES and CAPTAIN FUTURE



J. E. SMITH
President
National Radio Institute
Established 27 Years

I WILL SEND A SAMPLE LESSON FREE to PROVE I can Train You at Home in Spare Time to BE A RADIO TECHNICIAN

You Build These and Other Radio Circuits with Parts My Course Includes

You Conduct 60 sets of Experiments.
Make Hundreds of Interesting Measure-
ments and Adjustments to Give you
Valuable Practical Experience.



**SUPERHETERO-
DYNE RECEIVER**,
with preselector,
oscillator-mixer-
first detector, I. f.
stage, diode-detec-
tor-a. v. c. stage
and audio stage.
Receives local and
distant stations.

**MEASURING IN-
STRUMENT** you
build early in the
Course, and use in
your training and
practical Radio
work. It is a vacuum
tube voltmeter and
multimeter
measures A.C. and
D.C. volts; D.C.
currents; resistance;
receiver output.



**A. V. SIGNAL
GENERATOR**
provides ampli-
tude-modulated
signal for test
and experimental
purposes.



I Trained These Men



\$200 A MONTH IN OWN BUSINESS

"For several years
I have been in
business for my-
self in making
around \$200 a
month. Business
has steadily increased. I have
N. R. I. to thank for my
start in this field."—**ARLIE
J. FROHNER**, 300 W. Texas
Ave., Goose Creek, Tex.



\$5 TO \$10 WEEK IN SPARE TIME

"I am engaged in
spare time Radio
work. I average
from \$5 to \$10 a
week. I often
wished that I had
enrolled sooner because all
this extra money sure does
come in handy."—**THEO-
DORE K. DUBRE**, Mor-
sham, Pa.



SERGEANT IN SIGNAL CORPS

"I am now a Ser-
geant in the U. S.
Army, Signal
Corps. My duties
cover Radio op-
erating, main-
tenance of Army Transmitters
and Receivers, handling du-
ties of the Chief Operator in
his absence."—**REYNOLD
RICHARD W. ANDERSON**,
U. S. Army. (Address omit-
ted for military reasons.)



Extra Pay In Army, Navy, Too

Men likely to go into mili-
tary service, soldiers, sail-
ors, marines, should mail
the Coupon Now! Learning
Radio helps men get extra
rank, extra prestige, more
interesting duties, much
higher pay. Also prepares
for good Radio jobs after
service ends. It's Smart to
Train for Radio NOW!

NOW MORE MAKE \$30, \$40, \$50 A WEEK THAN EVER BEFORE

Here is a quick way to better pay. MAIL THE COU-
PON. Get my Sample Lesson and Free 64-page Book.
See how complete and practical my Lesson Texts really
are, how the information they contain is designed to
help you make more money quickly. Read about the
SIX Big Kits of Standard Radio Parts I send you with
my Course. See for yourself how you LEARN the fun-
damentals of Radio from my Lesson Texts—PRACTICE
what you learn by actually building some typical Radio
circuits you study—PROVE what you learn by making
tests and measurements while you adjust the circuits
you have built.

HOW YOU GET PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE STUDYING RADIO AT HOME NIGHTS

I send you, in all, more than 100 standard Radio parts,
including tubes, condensers, a meter, punched chassis
bases, even a soldering iron, solder and wire. With
these you perform more than 60 sets of experiments;
make hundreds of practical tests and measurements. I
give you special training to show you how to start mak-
ing money fixing Radios a few months after you enroll.
Many make \$5, \$10 a week extra fixing Radios in spare
time, and gain extra valuable practical experience as
well.

BIG DEMAND NOW FOR TRAINED RADIO TECHNICIANS, OPERATORS

The Radio repair business is booming and will boom
more as more and more old sets need repairs, new
tubes, parts. The Government is spending MILLIONS
for wartime Radio Equipment; Civilian Radio Tech-
nicians and Operators are needed in large numbers
by the Government, Broadcasting, Police, Aviation,
Commercial Radio Stations and Loud Speaker Systems
give good jobs to many. The N. R. I. Course has
led to good jobs in all these branches of Radio.

FIND OUT NOW I TRAIN YOU AT HOME FOR A GOOD JOB IN RADIO

MAIL THE COUPON. I'll send you a Sample Lesson
and my 64-page Book Free. Read them. Learn about
my Course; how I train you; the types of jobs in the
many different branches of Radio. Read letters from
more than 100 men I trained, so you can see what
they are doing, earning. MAIL THE COUPON NOW,
in an envelope, or pasted on a penny postcard.

J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 2K09,
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

GOOD FOR BOTH 64 PAGE BOOK SAMPLE LESSON FREE

Mr. J. E. Smith, President, Dept. 2K09

NATIONAL RADIO INSTITUTE, Washington, D. C.

Mail me FREE, without obligation, your Sample Lesson and 64-page book,
"Rich Rewards in Radio." (No Salesman will call. Please write plainly.)

Name

Age

Address

City

State

ZIP

Learn this Profitable Profession



in 90 Days at Home

Hundreds of men and women of all ages 18-50 make \$10.00 to \$20.00 in a single day giving scientific Swedish Massage and Hydro-Therapy treatments. There is a big demand from Hospitals, Sanitariums, Clubs, Doctors and private patients as well as opportunities for establishing your own office.

Learn this interesting money-making profession in your own home by mail, through our home study course. Same instructors as in our NATIONALLY KNOWN resident school. A diploma is awarded upon completion of the course. Course can be completed in 3 to 4 months. High School training is not necessary. Many earn big money while learning. The Army and Navy need hundreds of experts—both men and women.



Anatomy Charts & Booklet FREE

Enroll now and we will include uniform coat, medical dictionary, patented reducing roller and Hydro-Therapy supplies without extra cost. The reducing course alone may be worth many times the modest tuition fee.

Send coupon now for Anatomy Charts and booklet of photographs and letters from successful graduates. These will all be sent postpaid—FREE.

THE College of Swedish Massage
Dept. 663—30 E. Adams St., Chicago

You may send me FREE and postpaid, Anatomy Charts, booklet containing photographs and letters from graduates, and complete details of your offer.

Name

Address

City State.....

Keep the Blitz from Your Baby!



BUY WAR SAVINGS BONDS—STAMPS

This advertisement has been prepared, and the space donated by the publisher of this magazine, entirely without cost as a patriotic gift to the Government

PROVES MAN IS GOD

A strange method of mind and body control, that leads to immense powers never before experienced, is announced by Edwin J. Dingle, F.R.G.S., well-known explorer and geographer. It is said to bring about almost unbelievable improvement in power of mind. Many report improvement in health. Others acquire superb bodily strength, secure better positions, turn failure into success. Often, with surprising speed, talents, ability and a more magnetic personality are developed.

This startling method was found in remote and mysterious Tibet, formerly a forbidden country, rarely visited by outsiders, and often called the land of miracles in the astounding books written about it. Here, behind the highest mountains in the world, Mr. Dingle learned the extraordinary system he is now disclosing to the Western world.

He maintains that all of us are giants in strength and mind-power, capable of surprising feats, from the delay of old age to the prolonging of youth, and the achievement of dazzling business and professional success. From childhood, however, we are hypnotized by a false idea of what we really are.

Most of us know that God is everywhere, but never realize that God cannot be everywhere without being also in us. And if He is in us, then all His wisdom, all His power—unlimited knowledge and infinite power—is likewise in us. If God is everywhere, then there is nothing but God, and we also are that—a completely successful human life being the expression of God in man. The Holy Spirit of the Bible is an actual living force in man, and through it we too can do "greater things than these." The method found by Mr. Dingle in Tibet is said to be remarkably instrumental in freeing our minds of the hypnotizing ideas which blind us to the vast power of this living force within us.



A nine-thousand word treatise, revealing the startling results of this system, is now being offered free to anyone who quickly sends his name and address. Write promptly to the address below, as only a limited number of the free treatises have been printed.

The Institute of Mentalphysics, Dept. A-71, 213 So. Hobart Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif.

HE Mailed This Coupon

J. G. O'BRIEN

Atlas Champion
Cup Winner

This is an ordinary
snapshot of one of
Charles Atlas' Cal-
ifornian pupils.



...and Here's the Handsome Prize-Winning Body I Gave Him!

J. G. O'BRIEN saw my coupon. He clipped and mailed it. He got my free book and followed my instructions. He became a New Man. NOW read what he says:

"Look at me NOW! 'Dynamic Tension' WORKS!
I'm proud of the natural, easy way you have made
me an 'Atlas Champion'!"

J. G. O'Brien.

"I'll Prove that YOU, too, can be a NEW MAN!"—Charles Atlas

I don't care how old or young you are, or how ashamed of your present physical condition you may be. If you can simply raise your arm and flex it I can add **SOLID MUSCLE** to your biceps—yes, on each arm—in double-quick time! Only 15 minutes a day—right in your own home—in all the time I ask of you! And there's no cost if I fail.

I can broaden your shoulders, strengthen your back, develop your whole muscular system **INSIDE** and **OUTSIDE**. I can add inches to your chest, give you a vice-like grip, make those legs of yours **lithe** and powerful. I can shoot new strength into your old backbone, exercise those inner organs, help you cram your body so full of pep, vigor and red-blooded vitality that you won't feel there's even "standing room" left for weakness and that lazy feeling! Before I get through with you I'll have your whole frame "measured" to a nice, new, beautiful suit of muscle!

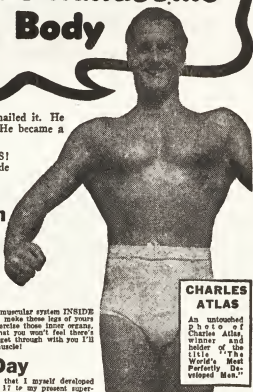
Only 15 Minutes a Day

"Dynamic Tension!" That's the ticket! The identical natural method that I myself developed to change my body from the screwy, skinny-chested weakling I was at 17 to my present super-man physique! Thousands of other fellows are becoming marvelous physical specimens—my way. I give you no gadgets or contraptions to feel with. You learn to develop your strength through "Dynamic Tension." You simply utilize the **DORMANT** muscle-power in your own God-given body—watch it increase and multiply double-quick into real, solid **LIVE MUSCLE**.

My method—"Dynamic Tension"—will turn the trick for you. No theory—every exercise is practical. And, men, so easy! Spend only 15 minutes a day in your own home. From the very start you'll be using my method of "Dynamic Tension" almost unconsciously every minute of the day—walking, bending over, etc.—to **BUILD MUSCLE** and **VITALITY**.

FREE BOOK "EVERLASTING HEALTH AND STRENGTH"

In it I talk to you in straight-from-the-shoulder language. Packed with inspirational pictures of myself and pupils—fellows who became **NEW MEN** in strength, my way. Let me show you what I helped **THEM** do. See what I can do for **YOU**! For a real thrill, send for this book today. **AT ONCE**. **CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 77-Z, 115 E. 23rd St., N. Y. C.**



**CHARLES
ATLAS**

An untouched
photo of
Charles Atlas,
winner and
holder of the
title "The
World's Most
Perfectly De-
veloped Man."

CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 77-Z
115 E. 23rd Street, New York, N. Y.

I want the proof that your system of "Dynamic Tension" can help make me a New Man—give me a healthy, husky body and big muscle development. Send me your **FREE** book, "Everlasting Health and Strength." No obligation.

Name
(Please print or write plainly)

Address

City State



...AND INDUSTRIAL WARFARE HAS ITS "COMMANDOS," TOO!

ON THE battlefield, daring "hit-and-skip" raids can only succeed when every man is *trained* to do his part to perfection.

Industrial warfare, too, has its "commandos"—workers whose skill and experience are backed by sound, practical, up-to-the-minute *training*! These are the men who were Johnny-on-the-spot when the nation called on industry to outproduce the Axis!

Many of these "shop commandos" got their basic and specialized training through the International Correspondence Schools—at surprisingly low cost! It's not too late for YOU to join their ranks—by starting now to get the training that will make you a better soldier on the industrial front, and

qualify you for a more responsible, better paid job!

Simply mail the coupon, and we will send you complete information on I. C. S. Courses in your line of work.

NOTICE! Please show this advertisement to your friends. Even if you have mailed the coupon, they can get prompt information by mailing a postcard or letter, telling their name, age, address and occupation, to Box 3968-V,

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE
SCHOOLS, SCRANTON, PENNA.

LOOK OVER THIS LIST OF I. C. S. COURSES— THEN MARK AND MAIL THE COUPON TODAY!

TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL COURSES

Air Brake
Air Conditioning
Airplane Drafting
Architectural Drafting
Architecture
Auto Engine Tune-up
Auto Technician
Aviation
Aviation Mechanic
Boilermaking
Bridge Engineering
Chemistry
Civil Engineering
Coal Mining
Concrete Engineering
Contracting and Building
Cotton Manufacturing
Diesel Engines
Electrical Drafting
Electrical Engineering
Electric Lighting

Foundryman
Heating
Heat Treatment of Metals
Highway Engineering
House Planning
Industrial Metallurgy
Locomotive Engineer
Machinist
Management of Inventions
Marine Engines
Mechanical Drafting
Mechanical Engineering
Mine Foreman
Navigation
Patternmaking
Plumbing
Practical Telephony
Public Works Engineering
Pulp and Paper Making
Radio, General
Radio Operating

Radio Servicing
R. R. Section Foreman
R. R. Signalman
Refrigeration
Sanitary Engineering
Sheet Metal Work
Ship Drafting
Shipfitting
Shop Practice
Steam Electric
Steam Engines
Steam Fitting
Structural Drafting
Structural Engineering
Surveying and Mapping
Telegraph Engineering
Telephone Work
Textile Designing
Toolmaking
Welding
Woolen Manufacturing

BUSINESS COURSES

Accounting
Advertising
Bookkeeping
Business Correspondence
Business Management
Cartooning
Civil Service
College Preparatory

Commercial
Commercial Illustrating
Cost Accounting
C. P. Accounting
First Year College
Foremanship
French
Good English

High School
Managing Men at Work
Railway Postal Clerk
Salesmanship
Secretarial ☐ Spanish
Showcard and Sign
Lettering
Traffic Management

HOME ECONOMICS COURSES

Advanced Dressmaking
Foods and Cookery

Home Dressmaking
Professional Dressmaking
and Designing

Tea Room and Cafeteria
Management, Catering

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
HELPING TO TRAIN AMERICANS FOR VICTORY

BOX 3969-V, SCRANTON, PENNA.



★ Without cost or obligation, please send me a copy of your booklet, "Who Wins and Why," and full particulars about your course ★

in _____

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Present Position _____

Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Limited, Montreal, Canada. British residents send coupon to I. C. S., 71 Kingsway, London, W. C. 2, England

TIGHTENS FALSE TEETH or No Cost!



OUR AMAZING OFFER

Don't suffer embarrassment and discomfort caused by loose dental plates. Apply CROWN RELINER in a jiffy your plate fits like new and stays that way up to 4 months. No old fashioned beating to hurt your mouth. Just squeeze CROWN from tube and put your teeth back in. They'll fit as snugly as ever. Inventor is a recognized authority in dental field. A patent has been applied for CROWN RELINER to protect you from imitations. After you rub your plate with CROWN, take your false teeth out for cleaning without affecting the CROWN RELINER. CROWN RELINER is guaranteed... it's harmless. NOT A POWDER OR PASTE! If not satisfied, even after 4 months, return partly used tube for full refund.



SONGWRITERS

We want your song or song poem. Melodies written for songs, poems without charge. We also revise, record and market your song. We have helped many, why not you? Send your song or poem today for free examination and details.

Hollywood Recording Studios
Dept. B23, Box 87, Prens Sta., Los Angeles, Calif.

MAN WANTED

BUILD A BIG PAY ROUTE

SELL TO STORES ON NEW PLAN
Carry a complete "Wholesale Supply House" in your hand. Let us start you making Big Money in permanent business of your own. Show Storekeepers in every business how to DOUBLE profits on Nationally Advertised Goods. Over 300 Products. No experience needed. Free Book gives amazing facts. Write today. World's Products Co., Dept. 730, Spencer, Ind.

INVENTORS

Protect your idea with a patent. Don't delay. Get "Patent Guide" and "Record of Invention" form—Free. Write today! CLARENCE A. O'BRIEN and HARVEY B. JACOBSON, Reg. Pat. Attys., 29-K Adams Bldg., Washington, D. C.

FALSE TEETH

Low as \$6.85

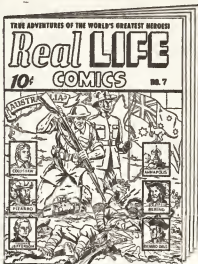
90 DAYS TRIAL TEST THEM EXAMINE THEM

We make FALSE TEETH for you BY MAIL from your mouth-impression! Money-Back GUARANTEE of Satisfaction. FREE impression material, directions. Booklet of New Styles and Information. Write today to PARKER DENTAL LABORATORY 127 N. DEARBORN STREET, DEPT. 17K, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

SEND
NO
MONEY

FREE

Approved by Parents and Teachers!



NOW ON SALE 10¢ EVERYWHERE

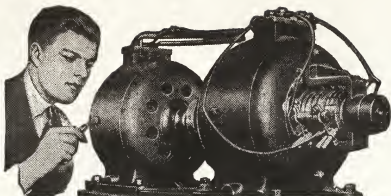


HERE IT IS!

America's Best Dime's Worth of
Picture Entertainment



10¢ AT ALL STANDS



MEN *whether you are* **16 or 50**

YOU ARE VITALLY NEEDED IN OUR NATIONAL VICTORY PROGRAM

Trained Electrical men are needed now! It's not how young you are, or how old you are. The question is—have you the training to hold a particular job that must be filled. Electricity offers you the opportunity you have always wanted—if you'll prepare for your place in this field.

ELECTRICITY

Learn By Doing in 12 Weeks

Here at Coyne you can train in 12 weeks—not by books or lessons, but on real actual electrical machinery and apparatus. You "Learn by Doing". And you don't need much money. I'll finance your tuition and you can pay it in easy monthly payments after your training period is over.

NO BOOKS—NO CLASSES—NO RECITING

Get into the fascinating, fast growing, well paid field of Electricity—a field that offers you opportunities and a future—in good times or bad times—a field that is a permanent necessity in war or peace. Here is your chance to prepare yourself for a lasting permanent future.

Here at Coyne, in 12 weeks, you can train for your Big Opportunity by working on real electrical machinery. Here you learn airplane ignition, wind

armatures, learn power plant operation, do house and factory wiring, etc. Coyne training is easy to learn. You "Learn-By-Doing", not by books. Not a correspondence course. You don't need previous experience or advanced education. With this brief description of my school I want to bring out this important fact—you don't need much money to get my training. I have many plans to help the fellow who needs training but hasn't much money. Mail coupon for all the facts.

I'll Finance Your Training

Coyne Training is EASY, PRACTICAL! You LEARN BY DOING. No dull books. No baffling charts. No reciting. You get individual training. First the Instructor TELLS you how to do a job. Then he SHOWS you how. Then YOU DO THE JOB YOURSELF on real, full-sized electrical equipment. You work on one of the greatest outlays of electrical machinery ever assembled. Don't let lack of money stop you. You can get training first—then pay for it in easy monthly payments after you graduate. If you need part-time work to help out with living expenses, I'll help you get it. My Employment Manager will give you LIFE-TIME EMPLOYMENT HELP whenever you're looking for a better job.

H. C. LEWIS, President

COYNE Electrical School

300 South Paulina Street, Dept. 72-84, Chicago, Illinois

Get the Facts

This school is 43 years old—Coyne training is tested and proven. Mail the coupon and let me send you the big, free Coyne book. This does not obligate you. So act at once. Just mail coupon.



RADIO—Right now I'm including an extra 4 weeks' Radio Course at no extra tuition charge.

MAIL COUPON NOW!

H. C. LEWIS, President
COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL, Dept. 72-84
500 S. Paulina St., Chicago, Ill.

Send me your Free Book and tell me about your plans to help me.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY..... STATE.....

**AUDEL'S NEW
MACHINISTS
HANDYBOOK
NOW READY!**

Prepare!

A KEY TO SHOP PRACTICE
For Every Machinist, Tool-
maker, Machine Operator,
Draftsman, Metal Worker,
Mechanic or Student. Covers
Shop Practice in All Branches.

A READY REFERENCE
Tells How to Operate and Set
Up Lathes, Screw and Milling
Machines, Shapers, Drill
Presses and All Machine Tools.

5 PRACTICAL BOOKS IN ONE!
90 FULLY ILLUSTRATED CHAPTERS
Covering: 1—Modern Machine
Shop Practice, 2—Blue Print
Reading and How to Draw, 3—
Calculations & Mathematics
for Machinists, 4—Shop Phys-
ics, 5—How to Use Slide Rule.

Set This Information for Yourself.
Mail Coupon Today. No Obligation
Unless Satisfied. ASK TO SEE IT.

**1600 PAGES
FULLY ILLUSTRATED**

\$4 COMPLETE • PAY ONLY \$1 MO.

THEO. AUDEL & CO., 49 WEST 23rd STREET, NEW YORK
Mail AUDEL'S MACHINISTS & TOOL-MAKERS HANDY BOOK. Price \$4.00 in
Days Free P.M. If O. K., I will remit \$1 in 7 days and \$1 monthly until \$4 is paid.
Otherwise I will return it.

Name _____
Address _____
Occupation _____
Reference _____ **PAL**

LAW STUDY AT HOME

Legally trained men win higher positions and bigger incomes in business and public life. Greater opportunities now than ever before. Big corporations are headed by men with legal training.

More Ability: More Prestige: More Money
We guide you step by step. You can train at home during spare time. Degree of LL. B. Successful graduates in every section of the U. S. We furnish all text material, including 14-volume law library, Law code, easy forms. Get our valuable 60-page "Law Training for Leadership" and "Evidence" books FREE. Send for them NOW.

LaBelle Extension University, Dept. 10329-L Chicago
A Correspondence Institution

MAKE MORE MONEY

Taking Orders For The NIMROD Line

Earn more every day in the year representing old established firm with a complete line of fast selling necessities: Shirts of all kinds, Ties, Underwear, Hosiery, Palmers, Sweaters, Jackets, Pants, Belts, Suspenders, Slacks, Sport Coats, Uniforms, etc. Every item guaranteed. Experience unnecessary.

Write Request for FREE SALES EQUIPMENT
NIMROD COMPANY

4922-J Lincoln Ave.,



Chicago, Ill.

**Exciting Photos of
FUN ON THE CAMPUS
in
College Humor
and
CO-EDS**

Each 10 Cents At All Newsstands

Calling All Puzzle Fans!

**BRAIN-TEASERS OF EVERY
VARIETY IN**

POPULAR CROSSWORD PUZZLES

ONLY 10c AT ALL STANDS

WIPE THAT SNEER OFF HIS FACE!



Dr. Seuss

BUY

WAR SAVINGS BONDS & STAMPS

*Smashing Action on Every Page of
America's Favorite Comics Magazines*

**THRILLING COMICS
EXCITING COMICS
STARTLING COMICS
AMERICA'S BEST COMICS
THE FIGHTING YANK
EACH ONLY 10c AT ALL STANDS**

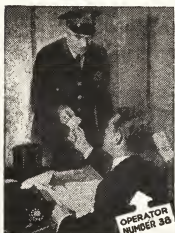


Our Graduates Run 43% of ALL the Identification Bureaus in America!

Here's a Partial List of City and State Institutions In Which Our Graduates Were Placed As FINGER PRINT EXPERTS

Arrest Him, Officer!
I'll have complete facts on the other fellow tonight!

Send for complete list of over 840 bureaus where our graduates are placed. THEN write the nearest bureau and learn what our graduates think of us.



State Bureau of Massachusetts	Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.	Masonville, Ohio	Oklmulgee, Okla.	Lincoln, Neb.
State Bureau of Illinois	Laconia, N. H.	Walham, Mass.	Hazleton, Pa.	Seattle, Wash.
State Bureau of Idaho	Cedar Rapids, Ia.	Grand Forks, N. D.	Yakima, Wash.	Ferris, Mich.
State Bureau of Iowa	London, Ohio	Brimerton, Wash.	Okla. City, Okla.	McIntosh, Okla.
State Bureau of Kansas	Elgin, Ill.	Long Beach, Cal.	Oss Moines, Iowa	Lawton, Okla.
State Bureau of Michigan	Miami Beach, Fla.	St. Louis, Mo.	E. Lansing, Mich.	Crows Point, Ind.
State Bureau of Minnesota	Ashville, N. C.	Lansing, Mich.	Glenc, Ariz.	Bay City, Mich.
State Bureau of Missouri	St. Paul, Minn.	Salisbury, N. C.	Hamtramck, Mich.	Roanoke, Va.
State Bureau of Montana	Augusta, Ga.	Elyria, Ohio	London, Ont., Can.	Chatham, Ont., Can.
State Bureau of Nebraska	Florence, S. C.	Carson City, Nev.	Compton, Calif.	Glendale, Calif.
State Bureau of Nevada	Hindale, Ill.	Burlington, Iowa	Trenton, N. J.	Joplin, Mo.
State Bureau of New York	New Bedford, Mass.	West Chicago, Ill.	Buena Vista, Colo.	Lima, Ohio
State Bureau of North Carolina	Neosho, Mo.	Amarillo, Texas	Gainesville, Tex.	Seima, N. C.
State Bureau of North Dakota	Saginaw, Ohio	Wichfield, Kans.	Elma, Iowa	Sillwater, Okla.
State Bureau of Ohio	San Jose, Calif.	Cambridge, Ohio	Chillicothe, O.	Owumright, Okla.
State Bureau of Oklahoma	New York, N. Y.	South Orange, N. J.	South Orange, N. J.	Victoria, B. C., Can.
State Bureau of Oregon	Lufkin, Texas	Savannah, Ga.	Great Bend, Kan.	Baton Rouge, La.
State Bureau of Pennsylvania	Tijuana, Mex.	Omaha, Neb.	Paterson, N. J.	Wilmington, Del.
State Bureau of Rhode Island	Boston, Mass.	Beverly, Mass.	Cambridge, Ohio	Parkersburg, W. Va.
State Bureau of South Carolina	Greenfield, S. C.	Cambridge, Ohio	St. Cloud, Minn.	Mobile, Ala.
State Bureau of South Dakota	Havana, Cuba	Franklin, Mass.	Schenectady, N. Y.	Huntsville, Tex.
State Bureau of Tennessee	Meridian, Miss.	Franklin, Mass.	Livingston, Calif.	New Iberia, La.
State Bureau of Texas	Dodge City, Kans.	San Juan, P. R.	Alhambra, Calif.	Sheridan, Wyo.
State Bureau of Utah	Portsmouth, Ohio	Headerson, N. C.	Livingston, Calif.	Ada, Okla.
State Bureau of Vermont	Selma, Ala.	Easton, Pa.	Saginaw, Mich.	Pontiac, Mich.
State Bureau of Virginia	Athens, Ga.	Syracuse, N. Y.	Wilkes-Barre, Pa.	Granite, Okla.
State Bureau of Washington	Hot Springs, Ark.	El Centro, Calif.	Miami, Fla.	Wichita Falls, Texas
State Bureau of West Virginia	Glens Falls, N. Y.	Tampa, Fla.	Boise, Idaho	Wichita Falls, Texas
State Bureau of Wisconsin	Billings, Mont.	Gadsden, Ala.	Miami, Fla.	Wichita Falls, Texas
State Bureau of Wyoming		Oacatur, Ga.	Miami, Fla.	Wichita Falls, Texas
		Anderson, Ind.	MIago Jet., Ohio	Wichita Falls, Texas

Want a Regular Monthly Salary?

Be a Secret Service and Identification Expert!

Enjoy all the thrill of getting your man—with no personal danger—PLUS a regular monthly paid salary and the opportunity to share in Rewards. Become a well paid Finger Print and Crime Detection Expert. Learn at home—in your spare time—and at low cost—the unique secrets of this young, fascinating and fast growing profession. We offer you the same course of training as we gave the hundreds of our graduates who now hold splendid positions in the more than 840 institutions partially listed on this page. Each of these bureaus has numerous graduates of ours on regular monthly salaries—and new openings develop from time to time.

Wonderful Opportunity for TRAINED MEN in This Young, Fast Growing Profession

Of the many thousands of cities in America, more than three-fourths are STILL without identification bureaus and many more are bound to come! That spells OPPORTUNITY! But you must be READY for it! You can easily master this profession that combines thrills with personal safety AND the security of a steady income! We show you HOW—just as we have already shown the hundreds who now hold good pay positions.

FREE! THE CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS NO. 38 MADE TO HIS CHIEF

Rush coupon for YOUR free copy of these reports! Follow Operator No. 38 on his exciting hunt for a murderous gang of counterfeiters. BETTER than Fiction, because every word is TRUE. ALSO, get free, "The Blue Book of Crime," showing the wonderful opportunities in the field of Finger Prints and Crime Detection. Take TODAY your first step toward a steady income and success. Mail the coupon AT ONCE.

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE
1920 Sunnyside Ave., Dept. 7967, Chicago, Ill.

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE
1920 Sunnyside Ave., Dept. 7967, Chicago.

Gentlemen: Without any obligation on my part whatsoever, send me the Confidential Reports of Operator No. 38, also illustrated "Blue Book of Crime," complete list of bureaus employing your graduates, together with your low prices and Easy Terms offer. (Literature will be sent ONLY to persons stating their age.)

Name

Address

Age



LET'S GET THIS STRAIGHT



THIS WAR is being fought by a big Army. It's an army that is called the United States.

Millions of us are in uniforms and many more millions are not, but how we happen to be dressed isn't what's important.

What is important is whether every one of us is in this fight, giving it everything we have. Any less won't win.

Whether you're a soldier on the firing line, or are backing him up as a soldier on the production line, you're fighting for the same things.

The decision, whether or not we are to live in a decent world as free men in the years to come, is in the making now. It's up to you, Soldier.

A Robert G. Smith

Colonel, G.S.C.
UNITED STATES ARMY



Dressed in my ridiculous costume, I proceeded to walk through a table (Chap. V)

THROUGH INVISIBLE BARRIERS

By EDMOND HAMILTON

Doctor Percival Withers, the Caspar Milquetoast of Physics, Asserts Himself with an Atomic Vengeance When Dastardly Foreign Agents Plot Death to the United Nations!

CHAPTER I

Contraterrene Cube

IT is my earnest desire, in this sober record of my astonishing adventure, to correct the delusions fostered by lurid exaggerations of the metropolitan press. Their gross perversions of the truth have, indeed, aroused my unqualified resentment.

**SCIENTIST RUNS AMUCK
WITH AMAZING INVENTION!**

This was the least distasteful of their sensational headings. Even more offensive to me personally was a tabloid-class headline.

PLAYBOY PHYSICIST TERRORIZES METROPOLIS!

It is certainly revolting to me, as holder of the chair of physics in staid old Plymouth University, and as recipient of the awards of two scientific associations, to be referred to as a "Playboy Physicist." The phrase

AN AMAZING COMPLETE NOVEL



carries leering implications of youthful dissipation which ill accord with my solid scholastic reputation and exemplary habits of life.

Certainly I, Doctor Percival Withers, do not look like a playboy. I have reached the mature age of thirty-seven. My rather lanky figure has a certain dignity, I believe. And I flatter myself that my shell-rimmed spectacles lend my naturally serious countenance an appropriate soberness. Altogether, I am very far from being the reckless, wild-eyed maniac whom the press painted in such lurid outlines.

And to think that I was catapulted into all that astounding sequence of unbelievable experiences by the casual remark of a young student! For it is quite true that if young Sanders had not ventured into my laboratory that June afternoon, I might never have taken the steps which entailed such overwhelming consequences.

My last lectures of the term were over, and I was zestfully applying myself to private research on that unlucky afternoon when young Sanders entered. He stared curiously at the apparatus on my table.

"What is that you're working on, Dr. Withers?" he inquired.

NOT unwilling to expatiate upon my achievement, I stepped back from the table. I rather liked young Sanders, and had spent several enjoyable evenings with him discussing the mathematical theory of gases.

"This is something that may win the Harrison award for me, Sanders," I informed him weightily. "I believe that when my report of this experiment appears, it will cause a sensation in physical circles."

He stared uncomprehendingly.

"But it doesn't look like anything but a mere copper cube, and a wave-

They smashed at Penny and me with chairs, and Krebs furiously fired his pistol (Chap. VII)



projector of some kind," he declared.

It was true, as he said, that to the eye there was nothing unusual in the appearance of the copper cube which rested on the table in front of my cameralike projector.

"Pick the cube up and examine it, Sanders," I suggested.

He reached out to do so, and then uttered a cry of amazement.

"Why, that cube's not real, Dr. Withers!" he exclaimed. "My fingers go right through it as though it wasn't there!"

As if unwilling to credit the evidence of his own senses, he again tried to pick up the cube. And again, his fingers sank into the apparently solid copper cube as though it did not exist.

I laughed, heartily enjoying his mystification. His jaw was sagging in a most ludicrous manner as he turned back toward me.

"What in the world is it, Dr. Withers?" he demanded. "It isn't real matter, is it?"

"It's quite real matter," I assured him. "But it's not ordinary matter like that of the rest of the world. That cube is contraterrene matter."

"Contraterrene matter?" he echoed. "I don't understand."

"Come, come, Sanders!" I cried reprovingly. "Haven't you read the important theory promulgated early in nineteen forty-one by Doctors Dirac, Gamow and others? Their hypothesis of contraterrene matter has excited all physicists."

"I seem to remember now," Sanders reflected. "It was something about the possibility of an atom with reversed charges, wasn't it?"

"That is it," I nodded. "Every atom of matter consists of a nucleus surrounded by a ring of electrons. In ordinary matter, the nucleus has a posi-

tive electric charge while the electrons possess a negative charge.

"But back in nineteen thirty-two," I continued, unconsciously falling into my lecturing manner, "it was discovered that electrons with positive instead of negative charges could exist. This led Gamow and the others to theorize on the possibility of an atom whose nucleus was negative in charge and whose electrons were positive—in other words, an electrically reversed atom. They called this hypothetical reversed atom 'contraterrene matter,' as distinguished from 'terrene' or ordinary matter.

"It occurred to me," I concluded my explanation, "to try to produce this hypothetical contraterrene matter in the laboratory, by simply reversing the electric charge of the sub-atomic particles of ordinary matter—that is, by taking a bit of ordinary matter and changing its negative electrons to positrons, and its positive nucleus to a negatively charged one.

"For that purpose, I devised this small projector, which accomplishes the reversal by means of an ingenious combination of electromagnetic waves."

Sanders frowned.

"But I still don't see why my hand goes through that copper cube as though it wasn't there, Dr. Withers."

"You are being dense, Sanders," I told him. "Why won't your hand go through an ordinary piece of metal? What is the scientific reason?"

He thought for a moment, wrinkling his brow.

"It's because the electrons of the metal repel the electrons of my hand—they're both negatively charged, and like charges repel each other."

"Exactly," I concurred. "But in this piece of contraterrene copper, the electrons are positively charged—and so they do *not* repel the negative electrons of your hand. Thus your hand—a swarm of electrons as you know—can go through the electron-swarm of the copper cube without hindrance."

"But if that's so, why doesn't the cube fall right through the table and floor to the earth's center of gravity?" he objected.

"A well-reasoned criticism, San-

ders," I approved. "But my projector is designed to imbue the lowest layer of electrons in the cube with a negative charge, which prevents them from moving downward. The cube can pass *horizontally* through any ordinary matter, but cannot pass downward and so it does not fall into the solid earth."

I TOUCHED the switch of the projector, changing the polarity of its force. It hummed loudly as I turned its invisible waves upon the copper cube for an instant. Then I turned off the instrument.

"I've changed the cube back to ordinary matter, by again reversing the polarity of its electron charges," I explained. "You can pick it up now."

Sanders did so, marveling. The cube, of course, was as solid in his hand now as any ordinary matter. He looked up with eager excitement.

"Why, it's an amazing achievement, Dr. Withers! Like magic!"

And then, prompted by some malicious fate, the well-meaning youth made the remark which was to be the innocent cause of my embroilment in the maddest tangle of events that ever enmeshed a hard-working scientist.

"Could you change a living creature into contraterrene matter like that?"

It was a brand-new idea, to me. Up to that point, I had been concerned only with the more recondite theoretical aspects of the experiment, but Sanders' suggestion opened up a new field of speculation.

"Frankly, I have not considered that possibility," I admitted. "Theoretically, it should be quite possible to do so without harm to the subject. I shall have to investigate that angle."

Sanders left soon after that, and on his departure I cautioned him to maintain strict silence on what I had just shown him.

"I do not want the credit for this discovery pilfered by some unscrupulous rival scientist before I can announce it," I explained. "There are such men, unfortunately. I would not want to make any explicit accusations, but I may say that I should consider it disastrous if Dr. Entwhistle of Skidmore College should get wind of my experiment."

My tone was stern, for I was remembering how the unscrupulous Entwistle had brazenly appropriated credit for my previous discoveries.

CHAPTER II

The Dog That Wasn't

AFTER young Sanders had gone, I remained for a time in deep reflection. His casual suggestion that living creatures might be changed into the contraterrene state had intrigued me.

It seemed that I should investigate this aspect of the matter before writing my account of the experiment.

Naturally, my first thought was to try the process on myself. But it appeared more prudent to attempt it first on some non-human subject. I was thinking of mice or guinea pigs when a happy thought came to me.

I had today brought the Scotch terrier of my fiancée, Cornelia Herrick, to the veterinary establishment near the University for a process of canine beautification known as "plucking." I had promised Cornelia to bring her pet back to her that evening.

Angus, as the terrier was named, would furnish a splendid subject for my experiment. With this thought, I hastened over to the establishment in question and soon returned with the terrier on a leash.

He was a small, black, beady-eyed beast who had always seemed to harbor an active dislike for my person. He had an expression of almost human hostility and suspicion as I prepared to turn the projector on him.

In the nick of time, I delayed turning on the force. It had occurred to me that once he was in a contraterrene state, Angus would be unable to breathe ordinary air, which would pass through his lungs. He would therefore suffocate instantly.

While the demise of the beast would not have caused me any profound personal sorrow, I was well aware that Cornelia would resent it. Therefore, I fitted the terrier with a small respirator connected to an aluminum flask

of compressed air. The respirator and compressed air would also be "reversed" to contraterrene state, and Angus could thus breathe.

Holding the cameralike projector toward Angus, I turned on the reversing force to its fullest extent. The dog seemed to shiver a trifle under the impact of the invisible force, but there was no other visible effect. He looked the same as before.

But when I put out my hand to touch him, I found that he had indeed been changed to contraterrene matter. My hand went through him as though he did not exist. Only the fact that a slight negative charge was imparted to the lower layer of electrons in his feet kept him from falling right through the floor.

It was so gruesome a sight, to see my hand apparently buried to the wrist in the body of the dog, that I hastily withdrew it. I rejoiced that I had proved that living creatures could be "reversed" without harm. The next step would be to try the process on myself. But first I must change Angus back to his normal state, so I took up the projector to do so.

Angus, however, seemed of no mind to undergo the rays again. He trotted hastily away from me, across the laboratory.

"Here, Angus! Good Angus!" I called, making appropriate beckoning gestures, until it occurred to me that he could not possibly hear me, since the sound waves could not affect the auditory organs of his changed body.

Angus regarded me with beady eyes over the snout of his respirator as I advanced on him. I made a quick dash, but he darted into a corner.

It was a vexatious predicament. I could not possibly catch or hold the beast now. Yet I must reverse the metamorphosis, for I could well imagine Cornelia's reactions if she found Angus in this strange state.

So, holding the projector, I approached the corner, intending to turn the force suddenly upon Angus. He backed watchfully away from me. To my horror, he started backing through the solid wall of the room!

I should have expected it, of course.

Since his body was now of contra-terrene matter, Angus could pass through ordinary matter as though it did not exist. Yet the spectacle of his backing through the solid wall, until only his head protruded like that of a mounted game trophy, was an unnerving one. Then even his head disappeared back through the wall.

Hastily I ran out into the passageway. Angus was trotting rapidly down the corridor toward the entrance of Physics Hall.

"Angus! Here, Angus!" I called futilely again, arousing the mirth of several students who happened to be passing.

I emerged into the sunlight and looked hastily about. Angus was trotting across the green campus toward the nearby street.

NOW I felt a new apprehension.

If Angus' singular non-material state aroused interest, the ensuing explanations would make my experiment known to all the world. That would permit the despicable Entwistle again to anticipate me in publication and claim credit for my discovery.

With sharpened urgency, I pursued the recreant terrier along the streets. Passersby were all turning to look at him, intrigued by the spectacle of a small Scottish terrier wearing a respirator.

Angus darted across the street. He ran full into the path of a large truck. Though the truck driver hastily used his braking apparatus, it was too late. Pedestrians uttered cries as the truck ran over the terrier.

Their dismay was replaced by amazement. The truck's broad tires simply ran *through* Angus instead of over him.

"Good Lord, did you see that?" cried a goggling man near me.

The truck driver had come to a stop. He emerged from his vehicle, staring at Angus in wild-eyed stupefaction.

"What kind of a pooch is that?" he cried. "I ran right over him, and he didn't seem to feel it."

He reached down to pick up Angus, with the worthy purpose of examining the dog for injuries. Then the man staggered back.

"Good grief, this mutt ain't really there!" he cried.

A small crowd had collected on the sidewalk by the time I reached the spot. Angus, who appeared to enjoy the situation, stood calmly indifferent as one person after another tried to pick him up. Of course, they could not do so, their hands passing through him as though he did not exist.

"You killed the dog and this is his ghost!" suggested one earnest individual to the truck driver.

"If that's his ghost, where's his corpse?" the man demanded reasonably. "You can't have a ghost without a corpse first."

I maneuvered cautiously, seeking to attain a position near the dog, from which I could suddenly turn the projector's rays on him. This was not easy, for the crowd around Angus was growing steadily larger.

"What's going on here?" boomed a new, authoritative voice.

It was a burly officer of the police, who had pushed his way into the throng. A babble of excited explanations came from the crowd.

"That dog a ghost?" echoed the officer with profound disbelief. "Are you all drunk? He's just somebody's pet that's got lost."

The policeman bent to pick up Angus. His hands, of course, simply passed through the terrier. The officer recoiled with a startled exclamation.

"What the devil is this? Some kind of a trick? This ain't a dog at all—leastwise, not a real dog!"

"It sure looks like a dog," muttered one of the awe-stricken crowd.

They all regarded Angus' solid-looking figure with a mixture of incredulity and horror. I had edged forward, but dared not use my projector in front of so many witnesses. For I would surely be forced to explain, and then the whole secret of my experiment would become public knowledge.

"Whose dog is this, anyway?" demanded the stupefied policeman.

I stepped forward.

"It is mine," I admitted. "Or, more precisely, it belongs to my fiancée."

"And who are you? One of these corny magicians?" he demanded.

With dignity I handed him my card. "I am Dr. Percival Withers, of the University. I don't understand your reference to grain."

"A wise guy, eh?" grated the policeman, breathing hard. "A stuck-up, spectacled wisecracker, huh? Okay, smart guy, I'm taking you in!"

"You mean that I am under arrest?" I asked incredulously.

"For lettin' your mutt run unleashed," he charged triumphantly. "Ghost-dog or real dog, they can't run loose. Now are you comin' quiet?"

"I shall certainly go with you for the purpose of complaining to your superior of your gross rudeness," I rejoined crushingly.

We started down the street. Angus followed, trotting casually through the legs of the crowd. With cries of horror the throng dispersed.

I was cudgeling my mind, as we went along, for some means of returning Angus to his normal state without allowing my secret to become prematurely known.

But I did not dream of what a labyrinth of astonishing predicaments I was to be led into by this situation. If I had guessed that afternoon what lay ahead of me, I would certainly have thrown scholarly dignity to the winds and have decamped from the scene at full speed.

CHAPTER III

Scientist in Trouble

THE officer kept tight hold of my arm as we went down the street, and we were followed by the more curious members of the crowd. I thought I recognized several acquaintances among them, but fervently hoped that this was not so. I could well imagine Cornelia's reactions if word of this disgraceful incident reached her ears.

Angus trotted calmly along after me, only pausing once for a moment to greet another dog. The encounter with a non-solid Angus appeared highly upsetting to the other canine, for he departed with great rapidity,

yelping in a startled manner.

When we reached the dingy police station, my captor ordered our curious retinue to remain outside, and led me firmly in. Angus followed us.

The superior police officer behind the desk, a bald, red-faced man, hailed my captor in a familiar manner.

"What have you got this time, Joe?" he inquired affably.

"Name of Withers, he says," reported the officer named Joe. "He was walking the ghost of a dog along Blaine Street without a leash."

He had stepped slightly forward to make his report. Angus was close beside me. For the moment no eyes were upon me, and I seized the opportunity to point my projector at Angus and snick on its force. It was done in a second. Angus was again a solid, material dog. I breathed my relief.

"The ghost of a dog?" the sergeant was repeating puzzledly. "What are you talking about?"

Officer Joe pointed emphatically at Angus.

"He ain't a dog, that's what I'm talking about. You can put your hands right through him. See?"

And he stooped with the intention of again passing his hands through Angus' body. Instantly Angus seized him firmly by the coat sleeve. It took the startled officer several moments to free himself.

"Put your hands through him, eh?" said the sergeant, in ironic tones. "Look, Joe—is it the heat or have you been drinking on duty?"

Joe's bewilderment was extreme. He prodded Angus unbelievably and narrowly escaped being nipped again. He was a shaken man from then on.

"I can't understand it," he babbled. "You *could* put your hands right through him. But now you can't!"

The sergeant ignored him, addressing himself instead to me.

"Look, you," he said in a confidential manner. "Suppose you just forget all this. Joe's a good man when he doesn't fall off the wagon. You wouldn't want to get him suspended by making a complaint, would you?"

Though I was actually much relieved at this denouement, I considered judiciously before replying.

"Very well. I shall make no complaint this time," I conceded. "I am not one to persecute an errant fellow-human."

"But I *did* put my hands through the mutt!" Joe choked wildly.

"Take him out and put him under a cold shower," the sergeant brutally ordered two other officers. "That'll straighten him out—I hope."

I took Angus by the collar and left the station. The dozen curious people who still waited outside gaped in obvious amazement as they saw me leading a quite solid and material dog away.

It was apparent that they began to doubt the validity of what they had lately witnessed. They looked at each other a little shamefacedly and then hastily went about their various errands.

I confess that I was tempted to apply my boot forcibly to Angus as I returned with him to the laboratory. His stupid actions had almost released my cherished secret to the world. Angus' capers might have allowed the conscienceless Entwhistle to steal a march upon me once more.

However, I seemed definitely to have proved that a living person could be changed to contraterrene state without injury. I now spent the remainder of the afternoon sketching the design of certain alterations that would be necessary before I could use the projector safely upon myself.

It was after six that evening when I unlocked a surly Angus from the cabinet in which I had confined him. I returned homeward with the beast. Cornelia, my fiancée, was to share dinner with my mother and me, and I knew better than to be tardy on such an occasion.

CORNELIA came forward to meet me when I entered the sun-parlor at home. Her cool, dark, statuesque beauty had a certain chilliness about it this evening, and there was a definite lack of warmth in her greeting.

I was not perturbed, for this highly intellectual girl was naturally of an undemonstrative type. We had agreed that compatability of intellect was far more important for a success-

ful marriage than purely emotional reactions, and had kept our engagement on a highly rational plane.

"Here is Angus, dear." I greeted her with a smile. "I trust that you are satisfied with the improvement in his appearance."

Cornelia made no answer, but contemplated me with her cool black eyes in a detached manner that made me vaguely uneasy.

"Percival, I am disappointed in you," she stated calmly. "I did not think that you, of all men, would resort to cheap evasions."

I was definitely startled, and my uneasiness increased. My mother now entered the conversation, eying me in a severe, condemnatory way.

"A Withers arrested and dragged to the police station as a disorderly character!" she exclaimed. "Percival, how could you do it?"

My heart sank. It was obvious that acquaintances had indeed observed me being escorted by Officer Joe, and had so informed Cornelia.

"Why didn't you tell me frankly of this, instead of trying to conceal it?" Cornelia asked me. "I'm not an unreasonable woman who would upbraid you. We could have talked it out together."

I felt a trifle nettled.

"There was nothing to talk out," I replied. "Your Angus broke away from me and I was detained on a charge of letting him run unleashed, but was released after an explanation."

No sooner were the words out of my mouth than I realized guiltily that I had told a half-truth. Bitterly I regretted the impulse. Cornelia, with her high ideals, would never forgive me if she learned of it.

However, she did not question my account, and her manner became less frosty.

"It is all right, Percival," she told me with a little forgiving smile. "We will just talk no more about the whole affair."

This relieved me very much. I became quite gay at dinner, entertaining them with a witty account of the debates at the recent meeting of the Physical Society. But as I maintained this light conversation, my mind was

simultaneously grappling with a serious problem.

It was my intention to test my new experiment next upon myself: to transform myself into contraterrene matter and fully investigate the physiological and psychological results. But the experience with Angus showed me that to attempt such a thing, in this little New England town where I was so well known, might have unpleasant results.

A contraterrene man would cause an even greater sensation than a contraterrene dog, if he happened to draw attention. I might easily become involved in even more disgraceful publicity than in the affair of the terrier, and I knew that Cornelia and my mother would never forgive me if *that* happened.

Thus I decided that I had better try out the contraterrene experiment upon myself in some distant place, where I would not be recognized in case anything went amiss. The great city of New York at once suggested itself as such a site. By the end of dinner, my resolution had crystalized.

"I forgot to tell you," I remarked casually as we arose, "that I shall be going down to New York for a few days. I want to consult Dr. McHatty of Columbia laboratories upon a certain very difficult point."

In saying this, I salved my conscience with the thought that I would drop in on McHatty before returning. But Cornelia suspected nothing of my subterfuge.

"You'll want me to help plan your trip, then," she said, taking gold pencil and pad from her bag. "You'll stay at the Waterston Hotel, of course, Percival—it's near Columbia and is quite acceptable socially. You can have breakfast in the hotel grill, and as for your lunch—"

IN HER precise, efficient way, Cornelia continued until she had charted all my hours for the whole trip. I was touched by her devotion, and felt not a little guilty at the thought that I would not use her careful plan.

The following day I spent in my laboratory at the university. I made



So many knives stabbing through my contraterrene body was a bit upsetting (Chap. V)

certain vital alterations in the contraterrene projector, and also devised an auxiliary respiratory apparatus for my use during the experiment.

The next morning found me boarding the train for the metropolis. I felt in unusually high spirits as I stowed away my heavy suitcase of equipment and settled back in my seat. It suddenly occurred to me that I owed my excitement to the fact that this was the first trip I had ever made alone.

It may seem singular for a man of thirty-seven to say that. But I had spent my whole life in this quiet little New England town, of whose university my late father had been president. I had passed from its graduate school to its faculty without interruption. On the few occasions when I had visited other cities to attend scientific meetings, my mother had accompanied me.

It was odd, but despite my deep affection for my parent and my fiancée, I was actually glad this morning that neither of them was with me. There was a certain thrill of independence about traveling alone that I now savored for the first time.

As the train neared New York that afternoon, I turned my mind to the problem of suitable quarters there. My chief requisite was an obscure place where I would be unlikely to meet any acquaintances from home. So when I debarked at Grand Central Station, I walked out with my suitcase in search of such a place.

As always, the roar and brutal rush of the metropolis was shattering to my nerves. The crowds of homeward-bound workers who jammed the sidewalks and jostled me about almost made me wish I had never conceived the project. However, I plucked up courage and trudged on in a westward direction.

West of Broadway, I penetrated into a more quiet region of side streets lined with superannuated brownstone mansions. Here I perceived the placards of many lodging houses, and while all these establishments appeared somewhat shabby, they were the type of obscure place for which I searched.

I ascended the steps of the nearest and pressed the bell-push. As I stood awaiting an answer, I heard from within an extraordinary medley of sounds, combining the loud ringing notes of a xylophone with the steady thud of a heavy object striking the floor, and the hoarse bark of an animal.

The door was thrown open by a formidably robust woman of middle age, whose straw-colored hair was in disarray around her red face.

"If you're another peddler, start humping!" she cried. "If not, what do you want?"

I raised my hat.

"I'm not an itinerant vendor, I assure you. Here is my card. I am searching for suitable lodgings, and saw your sign."

She only glanced at the card.

"Want a room, eh? Well, I've two good ones. But first—what's your act?"

"My act?" I repeated puzzledly. "I'm afraid I don't—"

"No snake or pigeon acts get in this house," she was telling me firmly. "Dogs or cats or seals, I can stand. But I won't have snakes or pigeons!"

"I fear there is some misunderstanding," I protested bewilderedly. "I have no animals of any kind. I am a doctor of physical science—"

"Magician, eh?" she said, to my mystification. "Are you working?"

"Well, the truth is that this is a vacation period," I began.

She cut me off with a wise nod.

"At liberty, are you? Well, rent's in advance here, I might as well tell you."

"That would be quite satisfactory," I assured her. "If you could let me see the rooms—"

"Come on in," she replied curtly. "I'm Mrs. Martinsen. Up this stairway, Doc."

SOMEWHAT apprehensively I followed her up a rather dark stair. Descending it at the same time was a little chubby, rosy-faced boy who stared at me in open curiosity. As I am always fond of children, I patted him on the head in a friendly manner.

"Are you going out to play, my little man?" I asked him brightly.

To my astonishment and confusion, the child put a cigar in his mouth, lighted it and then replied in a deep bass voice.

"Sure I'm going out to play—the races," he rumbled, and strode nonchalantly on down the stairs.

The landlady laughed heartily at my bewilderment.

"That's Colonel Tiny—he's working out at Coney Island now," she explained.

I understood then that the chubby child was in fact a mature male mid-get. This certainly was a strange house, I thought.

At the top of the stairs, we encountered another phenomenon almost as disturbing. A seal, barking hoarsely, flopped rapidly past us in the hall.

"It's only Sammy," remarked Mrs. Martinsen, and added with a sigh, "I do wish Mr. Corwin would keep him out of the halls, though."

As I followed her rather dazedly down the hall, I glimpsed inside one of the adjacent rooms a remarkable scene. A young man in pink tights was tossing a young lady similarly attired into the air, with striking dexterity. And from the room beyond came the loud music of the xylophone.

I now began to understand that I had unwittingly entered a lodging house patronized chiefly by persons of the theatrical profession. It seemed a rather alien milieu for a doctor of physics, but I perceived that it would be an ideally obscure retreat for my present purposes.

Mrs. Martinsen led me to a room at the very back of the house, a small chamber furnished with some oddly assorted pieces.

"Six a week for this one, Doc," the formidable woman informed me. "Bathroom's up front. No cooking in the room, and no tossing bottles out of the window."

I could not perceive at the moment why she should fear that I would jettison glassware from the window. I assured her the room was satisfactory and paid her two weeks in advance.

When she had gone, I looked around with satisfaction. The room,

of course, was shabby in comparison with my spotless maple bedroom at home. But here I could test my experiment upon myself without fear of disgraceful publicity.

"Now to work!" I exclaimed eagerly. "I should be able to make the first test on myself tonight."

I unpacked my suitcase of equipment. First I had to prepare my air apparatus. This consisted of a small, strong aluminum tank into which air could be compressed by an attached hand pump. From the tank, which strapped on my back, a tube led over my shoulder and would keep a flow of air constantly in front of my face without the need of a respirator.

Then I took up the contraterrene projector. I had so altered it that the emanating point of the reversal rays was now at the very center of the projector itself. Consequently the rays would change the projector itself—and everything within the range of a few feet—into contraterrene matter.

I had only to wear the mechanism on my body to change myself from one state to another at will, its power-source being its own compact battery.

I slung the projector over my shoulder by a leather strap, like a camera. I was now ready for the first test upon myself. Yet I must admit that I hesitated a trifle at so completely transforming the matter of my body. For a moment I stood irresolute. Night had come, and the uproar in the house had somewhat diminished. With a shrug of impatience at my own hesitation, I touched the projector switch. There was a humming sound as its powerful, invisible waves streamed out through it and through every atom of my being.

I had a swift, nightmare sensation of falling through inconceivable abysses, of darkness and roaring sound. Then my senses steadied. I found myself staggering a little from that strangely disturbing shock.

ANXIOUSLY I peered at myself in the mirror. I looked exactly the same as before. The projector switch, as I turned it off, felt as solid and real as ever. So did my arm when I pinched myself experimentally.

With fast-beating heart, I reached forth my hand to touch a chair. My hand went through the dark wood of the chair as though it did not exist! To all appearances, my hand was buried up to the wrist in the solid wood. I could feel absolutely nothing with my fingers.

I waved my hand to and fro in the chair, and still felt nothing but empty space. I thrust my arm through the table beside it, still without feeling anything. There was no doubt of it—I was a contraterrene man!

"What a distinction!" I thought gaily. "I am of a different kind of matter than the whole rest of the world!"

A sharp pang in my lungs and a choking sensation abruptly reminded me that I had forgotten to turn on my air supply.

Hastily I turned the little petcock. A thin stream of air hissed from the tank, spraying from the tube below my chin. I directed the flow upward to my nostrils and found that I could breathe quite easily.

"Now for more serious tests!" I told myself.

I walked toward the table. I felt as though I were walking on a very thick, elastic carpet, that sensation being due to the negative charge imparted to the lowest electron-layer of my body, to prevent it from falling through the floor.

I walked right through the table as though it did not exist, and then through the chair beside it. Exhilarated by my 'outlandish power, I stepped toward the wall of the room confidently.

"It's like Alice in Wonderland—walking through walls!" I chuckled.

I stepped through the solid wall without feeling it, and found myself in the next room. It was a small, brightly lighted chamber—and to my embarrassment, I found that it was occupied.

The occupant was a young lady who stood with her back to me, in front of a tall mirror. To my horror, I discovered that she was attired only in a wispy silk garment of extremely scanty dimensions.

Horried at my situation, I turned

to depart hastily through the wall. But the young lady saw my movement in her mirror, and turned swiftly to confront me.

CHAPTER IV

An Outlandish Proposal

THE girl facing me was one of uncommon pulchritude. Her mop of straight yellow hair was flung back from her face in a striking effect. Her features were of pleasing regularity, and her eyes were a vivid sea-blue. Also, as I could not avoid observing, her small figure was at the same time lithe and rounded.

She stared at me, lips parted in utter amazement, for a moment. Then her blue eyes darkened. Snatching up a silk robe and whipping it around her with a deft gesture, she advanced toward me, speaking vehemently. I could not hear her, of course, in my contraterrene state, for the sound waves of the air simply passed through me without affecting my eardrums.

I did not need to hear her, though, to know that she was angry. The snapping sparkle of her eyes was unmistakable. My own confusion and embarrassment may be imagined. To stumble in upon a young lady in dishabille was a thing that had never happened to me before in my life.

It was imperative that I explain how it had happened, lest the girl should form a mistaken impression. I could not speak to her while I was in contraterrene state. So I hastily flipped over the projector's polarity switch and touched its control. The invisible re-polarizing waves struck through me with the same momentary, sickening shock as they brought me back to normal state.

The girl's voice broke upon my ears at once, vibrant with accents of extreme anger.

"How long have you been hiding in this room?" she demanded of me furiously.

"I just entered," I informed her earnestly. "Let me ex—"

She cut me short, her lovely eyes now literally flashing.

"Don't try to tell me you just got in! The door has been locked since I came home, and so was the window. You were hiding in this room when I came, figuring to grab my purse. The police know how to handle rats like you!"

She started toward the door, unquestionably to summon legal officers. Aghast, I poured forth a hasty explanation.

"I assure you I was not hiding here!" I told her sincerely. "I entered this room quite inadvertently, when I walked through the wall of my room without stopping to think that the next room might be occupied."

She stopped in her tracks and stared at me in surprise.

"You walked through the wall?" she repeated. "Say, are you squirrely or have you just been hitting the needle?"

While I did not comprehend her peculiar phrases, it was obvious that she did not credit my assertion. That was not unnatural.

"It's true!" I assured her. "I have the room next to this one. And I came through the wall, like this."

To prove my claim, I rapidly flipped the projector's switches and in a moment had changed myself to contra-terrene state. I walked through the wall back to my own room, and then returned and changed back to normal.

The girl's blue eyes widened in a stupefied expression.

"How the dickens did you do that?" she gasped. "Did you hypnotize me just now?"

"Of course not," I replied. "I know nothing at all of the phenomena of hypnotism. That is entirely outside my own field of science."

"Say, I know now who you are!" she exclaimed. "You're the magician Mrs. Martinsen told me just moved in. Doc Winters."

"Dr. Withers is my name," I corrected her. "And I am not really a magician. I—"

"Anybody who can pull an illusion like that one you just got off is tops in the magician racket!" the girl cried warmly. "I'm Penny Lewis, a chorine over at the Club Intime. Doc, you've got a great act there. Let me see you do it again."

Relieved that her indignation seemed to have departed, I obligingly repeated the performance. This time, her amazement increased.

"It's true, you really do it!" she murmured incredulously. "Doc, how in the world do you pull a trick like that?"

Gratified at her enthusiastic interest, I began to explain.

"The process hinges upon the electrical structure of the atom—"

PENNY cut me short.

"Save it. I can't savvy the lingo you magicians use," she told me. "However you do it, it's a wow. You ought to roll 'em in the aisles with that. Where are you working?"

I began to tell her that I was at present on vacation. But the girl appeared to misunderstand.

"You mean you're at liberty, with a [Turn page]

NO FINER DRINK. . . under the sun or moon



stunt like that in your rep?" she cried. "What's the matter with the booking agents in this town?"

"I do not know any booking agents," I assured her. "And I fear that you misapprehend—"

"So that's it—you don't know any agents and they won't even look at your act!" exclaimed Penny. Her tone was one of warm sympathy as she went on. "I know just how it is, Doc. I've worn days out waiting outside their offices too. You don't have to tell me what it's like."

Her lovely blue eyes flashed with excitement.

"Doc, all you need is a chance to show this act of yours. Then the bookers would be breaking down your door. And I think I can get you a chance to show it. How'd you like to team up with me in a specialty?"

"A specialty?" I echoed blankly. "I'm afraid—"

"Don't worry—you'd get the top billing," Penny assured me. "'Doctor Withers and assistant'—no, that won't do. Too flat. 'Doctor Miracle and assistant'—that's better. More color."

"We can easily work up a little number," she continued eagerly. "And I can get Jake Harman, who runs the Club Intime, to give us a tryout."

It gradually dawned upon me that this amazing young person, under the impression that I was a professional magician, was proposing that we pool our talents for a theatrical performance in a night club.

"Oh, no, I couldn't do that," I told her horrified. "It's simply out of the question!"

"Why is it?" Penny demanded. "Are you afraid I'll want too big a cut? Look, Doc—we'll split seventy-five-twenty-five. That's fair enough, isn't it? You'll get the heavy dough, and I will get more than I receive now as a chorine. And I need it darned bad."

"It is not the money," I explained earnestly. "But the disgrace of appearing as an entertainer in such an establishment—"

Penny's blue eyes snapped.

"So you think I'm disgraceful because I work in a night club?"

Too late, I tried to assure her that

I did not have her in mind. She rushed on in bitter accusation.

"Look who's calling me disgraceful!" she exclaimed. "What would they call you if I yelled for the police and told 'em that you came prowling into my room, with a mighty wicked look in your eye?"

"You wouldn't do that!" I said, aghast at the menace in her tone. "I've explained my inadvertent entrance."

She shook her yellow head.

"The police might not believe, Doc. Of course," she said in a manner which I believe is described as coy, "I wouldn't call them in if you were going to be my partner."

I began to understand that this cool young lady was brazenly blackmailing me into agreeing to her proposal for a joint theatrical venture. My first impulse was to voice an indignant refusal.

But I quailed at the thought of what might follow. The arrest of Dr. Percival Withers for annoying a New York chorus girl—what a bombshell that would be back home! All Plymouth would rock with the scandal. I would be discharged from the faculty, my mother probably would disown me, and without doubt Cornelia would instantly terminate our engagement.

And also, as I now began to see, this theatrical venture which Penny proposed would give me an opportunity to achieve my purpose of making extensive tests of the contraterrene experiment. As a stage magician, I could test my powers in every conceivable way, and those who saw would naturally think it only a clever illusion.

Yes, the plan undoubtedly offered unrivaled opportunities for me to experiment openly without arousing attention. But it had a serious drawback in that I might be recognized in the course of my theatrical performances, which would irreparably blight my scientific reputation.

I RAISED this objection to Penny, explaining clearly and earnestly that I was not a stage magician but a doctor of physical science.

"So you're really a college teacher, Doc?" she exclaimed surprisedly. "I *thought* you didn't talk like show people, at that. But what are you doing here?"

I started to explain that my year's work was over, and that I had come here to test out my contraterrene experiment. Penny soon interrupted.

"I get it, Doc," she nodded wisely. "They let you out up at the college and you came to town to cash in on this stunt of yours. And this act we'll get up will do it for you."

Before I could correct this misunderstanding, she went on to the next point.

"And don't worry about being recognized. You'll be in costume and makeup and no one would know you. So how about it, Doc?"

I hesitated.

"It seems I have little choice," I said. "I wish very much to test the contraterrene possibilities. This appears to be the only way in which I can do so without arousing sensational publicity."

If I, Percival Withers, had only known how incorrect was that assumption! But, fortunately for myself, I did not dream of what lay ahead.

"Swell, Doc!" Penny exclaimed eagerly. "Tomorrow we'll fix up an act and I'll have Jake Harman give us a tryout. Now I've got to beat it, or I'll be late for the supper show."

I was about to take my leave when the girl voiced a doubt, looking thoughtfully at me with a slight frown wrinkling her clear brow.

"I just thought—I'm not going to feel so easy sleeping in this room from now on, knowing you can come right through the wall," she said.

My indignation was extreme.

"My dear Miss Lewis, if you are venturing to suggest—"

Her forehead cleared.

"Skip it, Doc. I guess you're regular. Only—knock on that wall before you come through, after this!"

Back in my own room, I spent a sleepless night tossing on the lumpy mattress. I was increasingly appalled by the realization that I had bound myself to appear in a night club as an entertainer and a charlatan. What if

I should be recognized? What would become of my scholastic reputation? I began to hope that Penny Lewis would give up the whole plan.

CHAPTER V

Doctor Miracle

LATE the next morning came her firm knock on my door and her clear voice.

"Come on, Doc—time for rehearsals!"

As the fisherman would say, I was hooked.

When I entered her room, in the conventional manner by the door, Penny's blue eyes were sparkling with excitement and anticipation.

"Jake says he'll give us a tryout before opening time this evening," she informed me. "That means we have to fix up our act today."

She held up for my inspection a gaudy costume consisting of a towering turban studded with glass jewels, and a violently crimson robe and balloonlike trousers such as are worn by the natives of India.

"How d'you like it, Doc?" she asked eagerly. "It'll be just the outfit for your character. I got it down at a costumer's for a song."

She insisted upon my donning the ridiculous garments. They hung in ludicrous fashion on my lanky figure. The turban was far too large and came down over my forehead and ears, almost to my eyes.

Penny surveyed me critically, her hands on her hips.

"Not bad, when we've altered it a little," was her verdict. "But your spectacles are out of character, Doc. Do you have to wear them?"

"Only for close work," I admitted, and took them off.

"That's better!" she approved. Her keen eyes inspected my face a little wonderingly. "Say, Doc, you look a lot younger with the cheaters off. I had you pegged at about fifty."

Rather illogically, I was nettled by this remark.

"I am only thirty-seven," I informed

her, "but naturally I appear older because of my intellectual maturity and experience."

Penny's blue eyes twinkled wisely.

"Doc, I'm twenty-two, but I've got on idea I'm really a lot older than you are. Anyway, that doesn't matter. Let's see what effects we can work up with your stunt."

At her request, I fumbled under the ridiculous robe I wore and turned on the projector. Once I was again in the contraterrene state, I demonstrated my powers of walking through chairs, tables and walls.

I also gave her a further effective demonstration by extending my arm and slicing it suddenly through her neck. That was as easy as moving through any other solid matter. But it made her recoil startledly.

When I had returned to normal state, her words for once were serious.

"Doc, this stunt of yours is almost too spooky! Your arm went right through my neck and I never felt it. Why, it makes you just like a ghost!"

Then her eyes sparkled.

"We'll use that in the act, anyway. And say, I've got another idea. Would a knife go through you without hurting you, when you're in that spooky shadow-state of yours?"

"Of course," I replied. "No knife, bullet or any other missile of ordinary matter would have the slightest effect on me."

"Swell!" exclaimed Penny.

She rummaged in a bureau and brought forth a set of heavy, wicked-looking knives.

"I picked these up when I was stooging for a no-good knife artist, two years ago. And I learned how to throw them, from him."

It developed that this remarkable girl had at one time earned a living by standing upright against a board while knives were thrown at her.

"I quit when the drunken bum grazed my shoulder one night," she continued. "He wouldn't pay me off, so I took these knives along."

She balanced one in her hand and flipped it with expert skill at the door, into which its point sank an inch.

"Are you sure that when you do your stunt, a knife going through you

wouldn't hurt you?" she asked earnestly.

"Of course," I rejoined. "Once I am in the contraterrene state, absolutely no object of ordinary matter can affect me in the slightest."

To demonstrate this, I stood against the door and turned on the projector. Then I signaled Penny to go ahead. She seemed most reluctant to make the experiment, but finally hurled a knife in her dexterous way at my hand.

The knife thudded into the door, through my hand. I felt absolutely nothing, of course. Yet I must admit that the spectacle of my hand apparently pinned to the door by the knife was somewhat upsetting.

However, I smiled to Penny to assure her I was unhurt, and she continued to hurl the knives at my figure. When she had finished, I seemed pinned to the door by knives through my throat, arms and chest.

I STEPPED away, and changed back to my normal state. The knives, of course, remained sticking in the door. Penny looked from them to me, as though she still could hardly believe her eyes.

"It gives me the creeps," she admitted. Then her blue eyes lighted. "But boy, will it wow the customers! Wait till Jake sees *this*!"

We spent most of the day working up the details of our projected performance, and late that afternoon I proceeded with Penny to the night club that was her place of employment.

The Club Intime was on a cross-street several blocks away. It was a large, shadowy oblong room, with many small tables grouped around a small polished floor, and with a counter for the service of alcoholic beverages at one side. The place had a singularly lifeless look, since at this hour it was not yet open for business.

Jake Harman, the proprietor of the establishment, was a short, fat, middle-aged man in a derby hat, with a weary face and sleepy eyes.

"So this is your Doc Miracle," he said to Penny, uninterestedly eying me as he lit a cigar. "Okay, let's see

this number of yours."

In a dressing room, I reluctantly donned the ridiculous turban and robe. I was startled, when I emerged, to find that Penny was now dressed in a very abbreviated costume of white silk shirt and shorts.

She winked at me brazenly as I stared.

"Got to give the act gal appeal, Doc. Even a magician has to have a good-looking stooge nowadays."

I changed myself into contraterrene state, and we went through the routine that Penny had worked out, ending with the knife hurling. Jake Harman sat puffing his cigar and watching us with a surprising lack of interest.

"It's corny," he said boredly when we had finished. "But I can use it as a filler. I'll give you eighty a week."

Penny burst into a scornful laugh. "You're excited to death about it, and you know it. Eight hundred a week would be more like it."

Considerable chaffing ensued between the two, which ended in our being engaged at the surprising sum of four hundred dollars each week. I was discouraged by this denouement. I had hoped the outlandish plan would fall through.

My apprehensions increased when we returned to the Club Intime that night to give our first performance. The tables were now occupied by patrons consuming beverages and food, while others danced on the central floor to the raucous so-called music of a small orchestra.

With growing trepidation I donned my costume and joined Penny in the wings. The professional entertainment had begun, and a young lady in a black evening gown was just concluding a touching ballad whose burden was that her heart had been broken by unrequited love. Loud applause greeted it.

"Don't look so scared, Doc!" Penny adjured me. "Get that solemn, mystic expression on your face. That's better!"

My solemnity was not caused by her adjuration but by the nightmare nature of my situation. I, Doctor Percival Withers, appearing as a cheap

magician! If anyone in the crowd recognized me, my scientific career was blighted forever.

The applause had quieted, and the ingratiating young man whom Penny had called the "M.C." was making a loud announcement.

"The greatest master of magic in the history of the theater!" he was proclaiming. "Doctor Miracle—the man who will astound you!"

Penny thrust me out into the spotlight ahead of her. Half blinded by the glare and quakingly conscious of many eyes upon me, I remembered to turn on furtively the projector beneath my robe, making myself contraterrene.

I now plucked up courage and walked through a table at the edge of the floor. The audience appeared electrified. They gaped at me as though not crediting their own eyes. I repeated the feat, walking through another table and two chairs. When I had finished, the astonishment of the patrons gave way to enthusiasm. I saw them striking their hands in frenzied applause.

They thought, of course, that it was only another cheap illusion of the theater, and were intrigued by it. A little heartened by this, and by the fact that no one yet seemed to have recognized me, I went on with the routine that Penny had carefully worked out.

WHEN I stood against a door while she hurled the knives through my body, I saw intense excitement on the part of the crowd. And when, finally, I concluded by bowing and stepping back through the solid wall, the excitement was terrific.

I could hear the loud applause as I used the projector to return myself to my normal state. Penny's eyes were shining with excitement.

"We killed 'em, Doc!" she exclaimed. "Go out and take a bow!"

My reappearance was the signal for fresh applause. Oddly as it may seem, I was somewhat gratified by this tribute. I returned twice more to bow, and would have returned a third time had not Penny detained me.

"Don't be a ham, Doc," she advised me critically. "You can't take curtain calls all night."

I was somewhat irritated by her implication that this sincere applause had turned my head. I told her so somewhat stiffly.

"After all, it would be churlish of me not to acknowledge their enthusiastic approval," I pointed out.

Penny laughed.

"Doc, I believe you're getting stage-struck. And you a guy that thought night clubs were disgraceful!"

We repeated our performance twice again that evening, each time to fervent applause. It was my intention soon to vary the routine by certain experimental tests which, I hoped, would yield me further information about the contraterrene state. But that would take time to work out.

The next night, the Club Intime was more crowded. It seemed that word of my amazing performance had got abroad. My second night's feats in the contraterrene state evoked an even more enthusiastic response. But by the time we finished our first appearance, I had noticed something which reawakened all the uneasy worries I had felt at first.

"If we play to this kind of biz very long, we'll make Jake fork over double what he's giving us now or we'll sign somewhere else!" Penny told me exultantly as we retired to the wings after our performance.

"I wish we could leave here now," I told her uneasily. "There are two men here tonight who watched me with extreme attention. I fear that they have recognized me."

The men to whom I referred had disquieted me by their close observance of my every movement. One of them was a plump, middle-aged individual with a rosy face and glittering, rimless spectacles. The other was a dark, lean-faced younger man.

"They are sitting at that table in the far corner," I told Penny, turning to point them out for her.

Then I froze in sudden paralysis of fear. The two men of whom I spoke had just risen from their table and were coming purposefully toward us. I knew instinctively that my apprehensions

had been justified, and that my discovery was at hand.

CHAPTER VI

Mystery Men

MY ALARM was extreme. I had desperate thoughts of flight, but before I could execute a retreat, the two men had reached us.

The plump, eye-glassed man favored me with an ingratiating smile and held out a soft hand.

"Doctor Miracle, I am Basil Schand and this is Mr. Leonard Krebs," he introduced himself and his companion. "We wish to congratulate you upon your remarkable performance. We heard about it today and came to see it, and it's really amazing."

I felt a momentary relief. It seemed that they did not know my real identity, after all. But Schand's next words revived my apprehensions.

"Would you mind telling us just how you achieve those remarkable effects of walking through solid matter?" he inquired eagerly. "Is it a new scientific discovery?"

"I can't enlighten you on that point, gentlemen," I replied cautiously. Then, with an inspiration, I added, "We magicians cannot afford to part with our secrets, you know."

"Ah, yes, I understand," smiled the plump Mr. Schand. "But surely for a consideration you would be willing to explain the secret to us? We would be willing to pay you very well for the information."

Penny eyed him with open hostility.

"Why do you want it?" she demanded. "So you can use Doc's stunt on the stage yourself, I'm betting!"

"No, no, nothing like that," Schand disclaimed hastily. "We are only interested in the scientific aspects of Doctor Miracle's feats."

He could not have made a statement more calculated to disturb me. A flash of insight crossed my mind. I thought I knew now just who had sent these men to buy my scientific discovery from me.

Entwhistle! It could be no one else! My bitter scientific rival, Dr. Entwhistle of Skidmore, had heard of my contraterrene discovery, had traced me to New York, and had sent these men to purchase my secret! Then he would brazenly publish it as his own, just as he had so unscrupulously claimed co-discovery of my sub-neutron findings a year before.

It all seemed quite clear to me now. So I turned upon Schand and Krebs a most cynical smile.

"You are wasting my time, gentlemen," I told them cuttingly. "I know just why you want my discovery, and how you plan to use it."

Schand looked badly startled at my assertion, and I saw the dark-faced younger man reach toward his hip in a gesture of alarm.

"What do you mean?" Schand asked rapidly, his slate-colored eyes suddenly very hard and cold behind his glasses. "What do you know about us?"

I laughed in a superior manner.

"Go back to Dr. Entwhistle and tell him that he cannot win spurious fame by purchasing my achievement."

Schand looked puzzled, yet at the same time relieved. Krebs was moving toward me with a most dangerous look on his dark young face. But the plump older man quickly restrained him.

"I see that you are in no mood to talk business at present, Doctor," Schand said easily. "Perhaps another time, then. Come, Leonard."

I felt a certain triumph as I watched them leave the club. Yet my elation was tempered with continued apprehension. For when the unscrupulous Entwhistle learned from his agents of my present disgraceful employment, he might try to blackmail the secret out of me. I would be in desperate straits indeed!

"Who's this Entwhistle you were talking about?" Penny asked me puzzledly.

"He's the most unprincipled individual who ever posed as a doctor of science," I declared vehemently. "This crass attempt to buy my discovery is just what I should expect of such an unethical man."

"Why, Doc, I didn't know you could get so worked up about anything," Penny said interestedly. "Anyway, forget it—we've another show to do."

I fear that I went through my remaining performances that evening with little gusto, for the encounter with Schand and Krebs weighed upon my mind. I seemed to be getting more deeply enmeshed each day in the tangles of an inescapable predicament. How was it to end?

IT WAS with somber thoughts that I walked home late that night with Penny. The girl appeared to sense my mood, for when she parted from me in the upper hall of Mrs. Martinson's lodging house, she endeavored to encourage me.

"Cheer up, Doc. Nobody's found the body yet," she told me in her care-free way.

"What body?" I asked puzzledly. "I was not aware of any corpse—"

She only laughed flippantly, ruffled my necktie with a familiarity I found a bit distasteful, and entered her room.

I was still brooding as I went on to my own room, entered and turned on the light. Then I received a shock.

The plump Mr. Schand and the dark, lean Mr. Krebs sat on my bed, obviously awaiting me. And Krebs held a black, lethal-looking automatic pistol whose muzzle was pointed directly at my midriff.

"Come over and sit down, Doctor Miracle," Schand invited, his rimless glasses glittering at me malevolently. "We've been expecting you."

As I stood there numbly, he managed a humorless smile.

"You see, we really must have the scientific details of your achievement. Since you refuse to sell the secret to us, I am afraid we shall have to force it out of you."

I understood at once that these men were not jesting, and that they would use compulsion. And a wave of fury passed over me.

That Entwhistle should have descended to such means as this! I had not thought that even he would go to the length of hiring thugs to extort a rival scientist's achievement from him!

"You may threaten me all you like," I declared hotly to Basil Schand. "I absolutely refuse to divulge a single detail of my experiment."

Schand's plump face creased in a most ominous smile.

"You'll change your mind, Doctor. You are coming with us, or—"

He waved eloquently toward Krebs' pistol to indicate the alternative. I now perceived that these men would resort to extreme measures, and that I was in fact in a situation of dire peril.

My brain raced at a faster speed than ever it had done in my safe New England laboratory. And almost at once, I received an inspiration.

"Gentlemen, let us talk this over," I said earnestly. "I—"

As I spoke, I had let my hand drop idly to the cameralike projector that hung from my shoulder strap. And I now suddenly snapped on the switch.

Schand sprang forward in alarm. But it was too late. The projector had already transformed me into the contraterrene state. Schand's grasping hands went through me as though I did not exist.

The plump man recoiled, staggered by the phenomenon. He pointed wildly to me and said something to Krebs, who rushed forward and clubbed at my head with the heavy barrel of his pistol.

That blow too simply passed through my contraterrene body without resistance.

I stood, smiling triumphantly at the two conspirators. Their bafflement was extremely obvious. They stood, conferring rapidly, and then again advanced and tried to pass a makeshift rope around me. Of course the rope also passed through my body.

I was chuckling to myself. My two would-be attackers were so utterly impotent to harm or seize me, that it was highly laughable. But Schand said something now to Krebs. The two men took up a waiting position, fixing their eyes upon me. It was apparent that they meant to watch me until I returned to normal, and then seize me.

I felt uneasy at this development. Sooner or later, the supply of compressed air in my little tank would be

exhausted and then I would have to come back to normal. I must get rid of these villains before that happened!

"I can't call the police," I thought worriedly. "They're the last persons I want investigating me. If I only had some kind of weapon—"

THAT made me remember something. Across the hall from my chamber was the room of Gorak the Great, a Slavic sword-swallower to whom Penny had introduced me that morning. He was employed to display his curious art in a New Jersey amusement park, and would not yet have returned home.

I had seen a rack of swords in his room that morning. With that in mind, I suddenly turned from my two grim watchers and ran through the wall into the corridor. I ran right on through the opposite wall, into the chamber of the sword-swallower.

Schand and Krebs would be on my heels in a moment, I knew. But I risked using the projector to return to normal state so that I could snatch up one of the long, gleaming swords in the rack. Then I hastily touched the projector switch, and was thrown back into contraterrene state.

And not a moment too soon! Schand and his companion, pistols in their hands, burst into the room in pursuit. Again they attempted to seize me, only to find that it was still quite impossible.

It was now my turn. I gripped the sword, which had been changed into contraterrene matter like myself. I raised it and brought it down in a swift slicing blow, right through Basil Schand's head and body.

It did not harm him, of course. The contraterrene sword passed through his body as though Schand did not exist. But the effect was apparently so unnerving, that Schand recoiled with a look of terror on his face.

"Ah, so you do not like the look of that?" I muttered grimly. "I thought you wouldn't."

I advanced again, and with a vicious snarl lending my face a menacing aspect, I thrust the contraterrene sword into Krebs' breast.

He could not even feel it, of course. But, to the eye, it looked as though a real, solid steel blade was buried to the hilt in his chest.

He gaped wildly down at it, halting his vain efforts to grasp my insubstantial body. I slowly turned the blade in his ribs, at the same time grinning in his face with the most fiendish smile I could assume.

Even though he felt nothing, Krebs' nerves could not stand this. He backed wildly away, opening his mouth in a cry which I could not hear. Both he and Schand recoiled into the corridor.

I followed them, slashing my insubstantial sword through their necks and bodies in whirling sweeps. They tumbled toward the stairs. The uproar had brought both Penny and Colonel Tiny out of their rooms, and the two stared amazedly at the spectacle of my pursuing two conspirators down the stairway with an unbloodied sword.

Out of breath, I stopped the pursuit. Schand and Krebs seemed to have departed for good, so I ventured to return to my normal state.

"Doc, what happened?" cried Penny Lewis, her youthful face vivid with alarm. "Weren't those the two guys who wanted to buy your secret?"

I nodded breathlessly.

"They tried to enforce their request by threatening me with a pistol."

"Why, they must be crooks!" Penny exclaimed. Her blue eyes flashed. "Doc, I bet I see now what it is. Schand and the other guy are criminals. They want your stunt so they can use it for holdups and robberies and such. Think what those hoods could do with a power like that!"

I was a little appalled. It dawned on me for the first time that the contraterrene process undoubtedly would give a criminal tremendous powers of evil.

"I'm going to make sure they're gone!" Penny exclaimed, and darted down the stairs before I could prevent it.

I was feeling a little dizzy and weak, a reaction from the perilous situation I had just escaped. My knees threatened to buckle under me. Colonel

Tiny, the midget gentleman who had been watching wonderingly, looked anxious.

"You all right, Doc?" he asked in his deep bass voice. "You look kind of green."

"Just a touch of vertigo," I stammered. "If I could have a drink—"

"Sure, I'll be right back with it," declared the diminutive performer helpfully.

HE HASTENED into his room and soon returned with a tumbler.

I gulped down its contents, and then choked and gasped for air. The clear fluid in the tumbler had not been water, as I had assumed, but some fiery beverage that seemed to have removed the lining of my throat.

"What in the name of heaven was in that glass?" I sputtered.

"Why, only gin," rumbled Colonel Tiny. "You said you wanted a drink, didn't you?"

The diminutive fellow had assumed unquestioningly that I was desirous of an alcoholic beverage. My head reeled slightly from its effect.

Penny Lewis came back up the stairs, looking worried.

"They're gone for good, Doc," she reported. "But I'm afraid those fellows are bad eggs. They weren't hired by this Entwhistle rival of yours—they're after your secret for themselves."

"I think they're foreigners of some kind," Colonel Tiny remarked in his bass voice. "One of 'em let go a yell in some queer lingo."

"Yeah, the whole business is queer," Penny said uneasily. "Are you hurt, Doc?"

"Not in the least," I assured her smilingly. "In fact, I have rarely felt fitter."

It was the truth. New life seemed to be coursing through my veins, and I felt a soaring self-confidence beside which the threat of Schand and his fellow-criminal was a trivial thing.

"I wish they'd come back here!" I cried ringingly. "I'd break every bone in their worthless carcasses."

"Not so loud," Penny cautioned. "You'll wake up the house and Mrs.

Martinsen will raise Cain."

I laughed indulgently.

"I am not afraid of our worthy landlady's temper. If she attempts to berate me, I'll soon quell her."

"Doc, for cat's sake pipe down!" pleaded Penny. Her expression was one of perplexity. "I never saw you get tough like this before."

Her cautionings had no effect on me. I was feeling a warm glow of geniality and self-assurance such as I had never before experienced. I felt that I could have solved the most complex mathematical equations in an instant.

"Listen!" I said in a dramatic whisper to my two auditors. "You are looking at no ordinary man. You are looking at the man who found the sub-neutron effect, an achievement honored by the whole scientific world."

I could perceive that they did not appreciate the importance of the discovery, so I began to outline it to them in simple terms.

"It's like this," I told them thickly, seeming to have a slight temporary impediment in my speech. "You take an atom—any atom. You take that atom, and you smash it with a stream of neu—neutrons—"

I made an illustrative gesture, but the effort somehow set me staggering so that I might have fallen had not Penny grabbed me.

Her small nose wrinkled as she sniffed suddenly. Then her blue eyes flashed with annoyance.

"Why, Doc, you've been drinking! I might have known it!"

"He asked me for a drink," rumbled Colonel Tiny in explanation.

Penny shook her mop of yellow hair disgustedly.

"You guys are all alike. Come on, Doc—you've got to go to bed."

I did indeed feel an imperative need for rest, for a certain dizziness had possessed my brain. My steps were oddly unsteady as Penny guided me toward my room.

A somewhat embarrassing incident attended my entrance. I was under a dim impression that I was still in the contraterrene state, and I attempted to walk through the wall, bumping my nose with some severity.

"Here's the door, you big dope," Penny reproved me. "Now get in there and sleep it off."

I turned dignifiedly toward her, meaning to explain in detail that I had imbibed the alcoholic beverage only by mistake, and that I was by habit a most temperate person. Unfortunately, I seemed unable to marshal the appropriate words. Still, I wished to make some gesture of apology.

THE only gesture that occurred to my confused mind was to take Penny's yellow head between my hands and implant a sound kiss upon her lips. The experience was so pleasant that I calmly repeated it.

"Well, blow me down!" Penny exclaimed, looking up at me with blue eyes widened by amazement. "Why did you do that?"

"Because I wished to, my good lass," I answered coolly. "I thought it would be nice and it was. Suppose we—"

"Suppose you go to bed before you lose the rest of your inhibitions," Penny retorted, thrusting me into my room.

I slept restlessly that night, beset by nightmares in which Schand and Krebs and the unspeakable Entwhistle all three came through the wall of my room and waved glittering swords above my head. When I awoke, it was with a dull, throbbing headache of extreme painfulness.

Vaguely I remembered my battle with Schand and Krebs the night before, the way I had routed them, and the potent beverage of Colonel Tiny, which had induced such a flow of high spirits in me. Then I groaned as I recalled the shameless manner in which I had kissed Penny.

"What would Cornelia say to that?" I thought miserably. "And how am I going to apologize to poor Penny for my low action?"

The door opened and the subject of my miserable speculations entered the room. Penny looked far from cast down by the events of the night. She bore a glass of foaming liquid which she extended to me.

"Heard you up, Doc, and fixed this

for your head," she said, quizzically inspecting me. "You sure look like a prize case of hangover."

"I seem to have acquired a pain in my head," I admitted spiritlessly, taking the preparation. I summoned my resolution and continued.

"I trust you will forgive my actions. I would not have dreamed of kissing you if I had not been under the influence of alcohol."

To my surprise, this frank apology seemed somehow to offend Penny. Her friendly demeanor appeared to chill a trifle.

"Well, it's nice to know that it was the gin and not my fatal fascination that made you turn caveman," she said dryly. "Oh, forget it, Doc. What I want to know is—what about those guys Schand and Krebs?"

"What about them?" I echoed blankly. "They did not come back again last night, did they?"

"No, but I'm afraid we're not through with them," Penny said worriedly. "They look like smooth, hard customers to me—especially that fat guy Schand. They seem to want your stunt bad too."

I shook my head.

"I gave them a pretty good fright last night. I don't think we'll have any more trouble with them."

My confident prophecy was deplorably inaccurate. That night when Penny and I emerged from the Club Intime and started homeward, a long car purred up to the curb of the deserted street beside us.

A quartet of shadowy individuals leaped from the machine toward us. Penny uttered an exclamation of sharp alarm. But before I could even recognize the peril of the situation, the four men reached us. A hard object descended with considerable force upon my cranium, and I passed instantaneously into unconsciousness.

CHAPTER VII

Stolen Secret

CONSCIOUSNESS returned to me with the accompaniment of a

dull throbbing in my skull. I sensed dimly that I was sprawled upon a soft chair, and I heard vaguely the anxious accents of a familiar voice.

I opened my eyes. Penny was bending over me, her yellow hair brushing my face and her blue eyes wide with alarm.

"Doc, are you all right?" she asked anxiously.

"I seem to have sustained no mortal injury," I admitted, ruefully feeling my head. "The thickness of the human cranium—"

My voice trailed off. I had raised my eyes and was looking around with baffled bewilderment.

We were in a large apartment of handsomely furnished rooms, lighted by tall lamps. Steel-slatted Venetian blinds closed the windows. At the door, with arms folded, stood a stocky, stolid-faced man I had never seen before.

Facing Penny and me stood four men. I recognized immediately the plump, rosy face and glittering spectacles of Basil Schand, and the dark, lean countenance of Leonard Krebs. The third man was a small, bald, gray-visaged individual of advanced age, who peered at me myopically through very thick lenses. The fourth man, evidently enlisted for his brutelike qualities, was tall and powerfully built. There was something cruel and mean in his face.

"You're not feeling too bad, I hope?" Schand asked me with a pretense of concern. "I must apologize for the rough measures we used."

Remembrance and realization rushed over me.

"Then it was you two who were behind that criminal street attack upon us!" I exclaimed indignantly.

"That's right, Doc," murmured Penny. "They knocked you cold and dragged me into the car with you, and blindfolded me so I wouldn't know where we were being taken."

Basil Schand was continuing his abominable affectation of courtesy. He gestured toward the small, myopic man on his left.

"Allow me to introduce Professor Hogrim, Dr. Withers," he said to me. "He is a physicist, like yourself."

"It is an honor," said Hogrim in thickly accented English. "When we discovered from the papers in your pocket that you were Dr. Percival Withers, I recognized the name at once. Who has not heard of the co-discoverer of the sub-neutron effect?"

"The discoverer, not the co-discoverer," I corrected him stiffly. "Dr. James Entwistle, who claimed simultaneous discovery of the effect, is an unethical prevaricator."

Schand held up an object which I recognized as my projector, taken from me while I was in a state of unconsciousness.

"Professor Hogrim has been examining your ingenious contraterrene apparatus, Doctor," he told me. "He believes that he can build a great number of such projectors for the use of my country."

"Your country?" I echoed. A terrible realization came to me. "You mean—"

"Yes, Dr. Withers, we are agents of a foreign power," smiled the detestable Schand. "We had heard of your contraterrene experiments. And when the amazing exploits of a Doctor Miracle in the Club Intime reached our ears, it did not take us long to fathom the truth. This thing you have devised will make our native land irresistible in war."

It was the truth! I was appalled as I realized it, for the first time. If my discovery was put to such use, it would enable contraterrene armies, contraterrene ships and planes and tanks, to sweep the world by choosing their own time to return to normal. They would be invulnerable until then, would be able to mass without fear of interference.

"Gee, Doc, they're spies!" whispered Penny, appalled. "Why, their country will use your stunt against America too!"

Schand smiled like a benevolent shark.

"In due time, of course. But to return to the subject. Professor Hogrim examined and photographed every detail of your projector. He is sure that he can quickly construct others like it, but wishes you to instruct him in its exact operation."

"I absolutely refuse, sir!" I exclaimed wrathfully. "I shall never facilitate your use of my discovery for purposes of unprovoked aggression."

"You are hardly in a position to refuse, Doctor," purred Schand. "This apartment is sound-proofed. We can use drastic measures, if we must. That is why I brought Otto with us."

The tall, powerfully built man glared at us with his small, angry little eyes.

"Jah!" he said gutturally. "Herr Schand gives the orders, I break you in two. Like that!"

He cracked his knuckles, loudly. Inside my heart must have skipped three beats. But I had my duty to perform.

I SNORTED.

"If you are implying that you will force me to comply, Mr. Schand, you are sadly mistaken. I shall tell you nothing."

Schand sighed.

"You misunderstand me, Doctor. We would not think of harming you personally. But I believe you are rather fond of this young lady. You would not like to see her suffer, would you?"

I paled at this smooth threat, for I could well imagine that they meant to carry it out. But Penny angrily defied them.

"You cheap lugs must get your ideas from the old mellerdrammers," she scoffed. "Don't let 'em bluff you, Doc!"

"We are not bluffing," rapped Schand, abruptly hard and cold. "Will you cooperate with us, Doctor, or must we work on the girl first?"

My mind had been racing. And I thought I saw a vague possibility of thwarting them. It was a hare-brained, dangerous idea, but—

"It seems I have to do as they request, Penny," I said dejectedly. "I cannot allow them to harm you."

"Don't do it, Doc!" she begged earnestly. "I'm not afraid of 'em."

I was forced to disregard her pleas. "Just what do you want to know about the projector?" I asked Schand.

Professor Hogrim spoke in his

heavily accented voice.

"The design of the apparatus seems clear enough, Doctor," he said eagerly. "It is the actual mode of operation that is not entirely comprehensible."

Basil Schand nodded.

"The professor wishes you to instruct him how to use the projector upon himself, Dr. Withers."

"Very well," I sighed. "Hold the projector in your hands close to your chest, Professor. Press the red button down for a half minute, to change yourself to contraterrene state. When you wish to return to normal state, press down the black button."

Eagerly the evil little savant followed my directions. As he pressed the first button, a slight shock seemed to run through his figure.

"He is contraterrene now," I told the spies. "See for yourself."

Doubtfully, Schand extended his hand. It went through Professor Hogrim as though he did not exist.

Schand's plump face shone with triumph.

"We've got it!" he told Krebs excitedly. "The greatest weapon in the world, for our people!"

"Doc, why did you tell them?" wailed Penny.

"Say, what's the matter with Hogrim?" demanded Krebs sharply.

The little professor's first expression of exultation had changed to sharp panic. He was choking, his face turning blue, his hands tearing wildly at his collar.

I knew what was wrong, for I had counted on it. Hogrim had not foreseen that he would have no air to breathe in the contraterrene state, since he did not wear such a compressed-air tank as I wore. He was beginning to suffocate.

"He's used the wrong control!" I cried in simulated excitement, edging forward to the contraterrene projector. "I'll try to show him what to do."

I motioned Hogrim vehemently to press the projector's black button. Strangling, half senseless, he managed to do so.

The instant he pressed that button and restored himself to normal state, I acted! It was the opportunity I

had awaited, for in that moment the attention of the other spies was all upon their strangling compatriot.

I snatched the now solid projector from the hands of the staggering Hogrim. With a single swift movement, I whirled around toward Penny, grabbed her tight against me, and pressed the projector's red button.

The instant shock of invisible force tingled through us as the projector's aura hurled us both into the contraterrene state. Hastily I turned the petcock of my air-tank open, so that it would feed a flow of air sufficient for us both to breathe if we kept our heads together.

"Doc, what happened?" Penny gasped startledly. "I felt like I was falling—"

"You're safe now," I assured her. "They can't touch us now!"

SCHAND and his fellow spies had gone crazy with rage as they realized the trick I had played on them. Krebs was furiously firing his pistol at us, but of course the bullets passed through our contraterrene bodies harmlessly, and we could not even hear the reports. The spies smashed at us with chairs, but these were as ineffective.

"Good grief, I feel like a live ghost!" Penny cried shakily. "Doc, what are we going to do?"

"We're going to get out of here and tell the police about these spies at once!" I answered. "These men have learned the design of the contraterrene projector, and they mustn't be allowed to escape with it."

I led her forward. We walked right through the door and started down the stairs of the apartment building.

Schand and his comrades followed us, their eyes blazing with impotent fury as they still sought to prevent our escape. We walked right through them as though they were shadows, and gained the street.

It was a quiet residential street of tall apartment buildings, looking deserted at this time of night. Penny declared that it was in the upper west side district, and we started east toward Broadway and the nearest police station.

Schand and his men followed us impotently as far as the lights of Broadway. Then the plump master spy shook his head and gave an order, at which they all hastily retraced their path and disappeared.

I ventured then to restore our bodies to normal by means of the projector.

"We must be quick!" I said panting. "Schand and his men will leave that base of theirs as quickly as possible now."

"There's a police station down in the next block, Doc!" cried Penny.

CHAPTER VIII

Perils of Publicity

WHEN we hurried into the station, the officer on duty behind the desk looked at our disordered appearance with scant interest.

"What is it—stickup or auto accident?" he asked, yawning.

"We have just escaped the clutches of a group of dangerous foreign spies, Officer!" I cried. "It is imperative that you send men at once to apprehend them, for they possess the secret of a vital invention."

The officer looked up with more interest, and the policemen in the room gathered round us curiously.

"Well, well—so there's a spy nest in this precinct," said the officer mildly. "And so they had you imprisoned, did they? Tell me—did they all have black mustaches and carry long daggers?"

I perceived that he did not credit my information, and his stupidity made me furious.

"While you try to be humorous, they are decamping!" I charged angrily. "What are you going to do about it?"

"I'm going to lock you both up for being drunk and disorderly," he growled. "Why can't you people go home when you get loaded up like this?"

"I am not intoxicated and neither is this young lady!" I shouted. "I am Dr. Percival Withers of Plymouth

University, and I demand that you investigate my information at once."

For the first time, I appeared to have made an impression on the officer. He stiffened in his chair and eyed me quite closely.

"What did you say your name was?" he asked sharply. When I repeated it, he demanded, "Got any identification?"

I fumbled in my pockets. My wallet and papers were gone, but I handed up my card-case and also my watch, on which my name was engraved.

The officer examined them narrowly. Then he pawed amid a pile of papers on his desk, and fished out one which he held up for me to see.

"If you're Dr. Withers, who is this?" he demanded grimly.

The paper he held up was a police circular, dated only the day before. It was headed:

MISSING— DR. PERCIVAL WITHERS OF PLYMOUTH UNIV.

The text beneath stated that Dr. Withers had gone to New York to visit Columbia laboratories, but had never appeared there and was feared to have met with foul play. Anyone with information of his whereabouts was requested to communicate with Miss Cornelia Herrick, Plymouth.

Beneath this startling text was a large photograph of a solemn, bespectacled countenance—an old picture of myself.

It did not take long for me to comprehend what had happened. Cornelia had doubtless tried to communicate with me in New York. When she learned that I had never appeared at the hotel she had chosen for me, nor at Columbia laboratories, she had jumped to the conclusion that I had met with some mischance and had promptly notified the police.

I suppose that I should have been gratified by this evidence of Cornelia's devotion to me. But instead, I felt only a strong irritation at her action, and wished heartily that she had minded her own business.

"It's all a mistake, Officer," I declared. "You can disregard that cir-

cular, since I've told you that I am Dr. Withers."

"You're not Dr. Withers!" rapped the officer accusingly. "You don't look like this guy in the picture at all. Just who are you, anyway?"

I was startled by this. On second thought, I could see that in fact there was no close resemblance between myself at the moment and that old photograph. The absence of my shell-rimmed spectacles made a great change in appearance, and my disordered hair and flushed face no doubt contributed further to the contrast.

"What did you do with the real Withers?" demanded the officer. "Dump him in the river after you robbed him of his watch and valuables?"

"You must be out of your mind!" I retorted warmly. "I am the man in that picture. This young lady will bear me out."

"Of course he's Doc Withers!" declared Penny indignantly. "He only used the name of Doctor Miracle as a stage name."

"Ah, so this guy is called Doctor Miracle?" exclaimed the police officer triumphantly, looking sternly at me. "All right, now—what did you two do with Withers' body?"

"This is insane!" I cried. "Withers' body is right here—I mean, it's *my* body. And while you are disputing my identity, a group of foreign agents is escaping with the secret of a dangerous invention!"

THE officer's thin smile was one of complete skepticism. He gestured to the policemen around us.

"Lock 'em up, boys," he ordered. "We'll find out who they are and what they did with Withers."

The policemen seized us. Utter despair possessed me, for I knew that at this very moment Schand and his accomplices might be departing with the secret of my projector, to be used for their country's evil purposes. I could not allow that to happen! If the police would not help me stop Schand, I'd go back and stop him myself!

The policemen were dragging me toward a barred door, while other men led Penny to a different part of the

prison. My projector was still hanging around my shoulder. I reached down and pressed its switch.

The clutching hands of the policemen suddenly clutched right through my body as I became contraterrene. The officers recoiled in horror at finding that I had suddenly become ghost-like in their grasp.

I paid no attention to their extreme alarm and confusion as I debated desperately for a moment about trying to rescue Penny. I could not do so without first returning to normal state, and if I did that, they would seize me again. It was imperative that I stop Schand's group from escaping. Once I had done that, I could come back and make full explanations that would quickly bring about Penny's release.

So, with an encouraging wave of my hand to the girl, I started hastily for the door. The policemen ran to stop me, blocking my way. But I simply ran through their bulky bodies and gained the street.

They poured out into the street after me. To shake them off, I darted through a solid brick block across the way, emerging into the parallel street. Then I started on a run back to the residential street on which the apartment of Schand's evil clique was located.

"If I can't do anything else, I can at least trail Schand and his accomplices until I can somehow summon help," I thought.

When I reached the spies' apartment, I found the door open. A premonition seized me. A rapid search of the apartment realized it to the full. Schand and the other three foreign agents were gone.

"And Professor Hogrim knows how to construct more projectors!" I thought, appalled. "Projectors for their nation to use in conquest—"

I fear that for a time I stood like a dazed man in that empty apartment, crushed by the disaster of which I had been the unwitting cause. Why had I not had the sense to foresee that my contraterrene discovery would be coveted by every predatory country for war?

I must somehow retrieve the catas-

trophe of which I was author, must somehow find Schand and Krebs and the others before they could leave the United States entirely. They would surely have gone to another place of concealment until it was feasible for them to get cleanly away.

Returning to my normal state, I ransacked the apartment thoroughly in search of some clue as to the enemies' present whereabouts. I found nothing. They were too efficient a group to have left anything of a revealing nature behind.

Feeling more hopeless each hour, I undertook a search of all the other apartments in the building. By making myself contraterrene again and sticking my head through doors, I was able to inspect each suite. The men I sought were nowhere about.

Hours had passed, and it was bright early morning when I emerged from the apartment building. I felt a beaten man. Somewhere in this vast metropolis, that repellent little scientist Hogrim must already be duplicating my projector for his colleagues. But how could I find them?

Pausing irresolutely on the street corner, racking my brain for a possible course to follow, I started as a headline on the newspaper stand caught my eye. A picture of myself, in costume as Doctor Miracle, was on the front page.

SCIENTIST BELIEVED KILLED AND ROBBED OF INVENTION!

The sub-heading declared:

INVULNERABLE CRIMINAL
NOW AT LARGE IN CITY

STUNNED, I rapidly read the lurid account which the press had apparently gathered from the police from whom I had escaped.

Police are conducting a city-wide search for a Doctor Miracle, entertainer in the Club Intime, who is charged with having done away with Dr. Percival Withers, a noted physicist of Plymouth University.

Doctor Withers journeyed to New York several days ago, bringing with him the secret of an amazing scientific discovery known as "contraterrene matter." Police have learned of this secret through one Eugene Sanders, a student at Plymouth, who witnessed its operation in Dr. With-

ers' laboratory last week.

It is now believed that the physicist was murdered and robbed of his invention soon after reaching New York. A man has been identified as Doctor Miracle, the night club entertainer in question, and his girl accomplice, Penny Lewis, are thought to have committed this murder and robbery, and to have used the secret in their act.

Doctor Miracle and his feminine companion were apprehended late last night by police. But the night club magician escaped custody by making use of the stolen scientific secret. He is now at large in the metropolis, though his feminine companion is still in custody.

It appears that the stolen secret gives its possessor the power of assuming a phantomlike insubstantiality. He can walk through walls or any other solid matter, and no one can touch him. A criminal armed with such appalling powers is a menace to the whole city. The entire police department has been mobilized to catch Doctor Miracle at all costs.

CHAPTER IX

Manhattan Manhunt

MY utter consternation may be imagined. I stood accused of murdering and robbing *myself*. And the entire Police Department of New York was searching for me upon that charge. The situation seemed unbelievably fantastic.

Yet I could well understand why the authorities thought me two different men. The newspaper picture of me as Doctor Miracle, a picture I recognized as one taken by the Club Intime for display purposes, certainly did not resemble the police-circular photograph of my former solemn, bespectacled self.

My first impulse was to return at once to the police and clear up the whole tangle. They would not believe me at first. But when my mother and Cornelia could be brought to New York, their testimony would soon dispel all doubts.

"But that will take two days!" I thought, appalled. "And what will Basil Schand and Professor Hogrim and their accomplices be doing in that time?"

I knew quite well what they would be doing. Hogrim would be working industriously—probably was working

already—to construct more contraterrene projectors like mine. Once the unscrupulous spies possessed such projectors, their escape to their own country would be assured.

"They've got to be found before they build projectors!" I told myself desperately. "But the police won't believe my story about them—not until I've proved I'm Dr. Withers. And that will be too late!"

Sinkingly, I realized that there was only one course open to me, if I wished to prevent Schand's group from delivering my great invention to a predatory foreign government. I must somehow evade the police until I had myself tracked down the spies.

It was an almost hopeless situation. All the thousands of police officers in the metropolis would be on the lookout for me. And even if I could elude them by means of the contraterrene projector, how was I to go about finding Schand and Hogrim and the others? I had not the slightest idea of where their new place of concealment might be in this great city.

Penny might be able to help me. With her resourceful brain and her extensive knowledge of New York, she might be able to suggest a way of tracing the missing spies. I determined to return to the police station in which she was confined, despite the risks, and confer with her. I might be able to get in to see her without being observed, in my contraterrene state.

First, though, I returned briefly to normal and replenished the supply of compressed air in the small aluminum tank I carried in a special pocket of my coat. It would not do for me to run out of air and be forced to return to normal at some critical moment! That done, I went contraterrene again.

Then I started back toward the police station by a circuitous route. I approached the building from the rear. Pausing beside the blank brick wall, I glanced hastily around to make sure that I was unobserved, and then stepped quickly through the wall.

I found myself in a gloomy corridor. There were no officers back here at the moment, though I heard sounds of excitement from the front of the

station. I slipped through a plaster wall, and found myself in the small cell block. Here too there were no legal officers at present. Two frowsy men were sleeping in one cell, and in another one Penny was pacing restlessly to and fro.

I walked easily through the bars of the various cell divisions, into Penny's cubicle. She turned and saw me as I changed myself back to normal.

"Doc!" she cried eagerly, running toward me and eagerly grasping my shoulders. "Gee, you don't know how glad I am to see you!"

I was not a little affected by the warmth of her greeting, for I had become oddly attached to this cheerful, flippant young person.

"Did you find Schand and his pals?" she asked me tensely.

DISCOURAGEDLY, I told her how they had escaped me, and of my fears that they would at once build contraterrene projectors, which would assure their easy escape to their own land with my secret.

"I can think of no way to trace them," I concluded, "for I have not the vaguest conception of how detectives trail their quarries. Nor can I summon help from the police, for they are all searching for me."

"It is a prize mess," Penny admitted, her blue eyes serious. "But you'll never find 'em by trying detective stuff, Doc. You're a scientist. Can't you figure out some scientific angle to learn where they are?"

"I fear not," I answered gloomily. "If a special laboratory were required for construction of the projectors, I might trace these spies that way. But the projectors could be built in almost any place, once one had assembled the necessary materials."

My voice trailed off, as a new thought came to me. I felt a sudden surge of hope.

"The necessary materials!" I repeated excitedly. "That may be the clue I need, Penny! The materials Hogrim will need to make projectors are quite simple for the most part, but there is one exception. That is the emanation electrode of the apparatus.

It must be of terbium!"

"So what?" retorted Penny blankly. "I don't even know what terbium is."

"It's one of the rare earths—a metallic element that is highly scarce," I explained excitedly. "There are only two big chemical supply houses in New York that can supply pure terbium. I know, because I canvassed the sources of supply when building my own projector."

"I get it now, Doc!" Penny exclaimed eagerly. "Hogrim will have to get terbium from one of these places before he can make any projectors! We can pick up his trail that way!"

I stared, at her use of the plural pronoun.

"Not 'we', Penny," I declared. "You can't go with me."

"What do you mean, I can't go?" she cried. "You can get me out of this jail the same as you got me out of Schand's apartment, can't you?"

"I could, but I won't," I declared firmly. "Schand and his confederates are dangerous men, and I'm not going to expose you to such risks when the fault of this whole thing is mine. Besides, if we both went contraterrene, it would be impractical for the two of us to use limited air supply for long. No, Penny, you're going to stay here where you're safe."

She made vociferous objections, but my resolution was immovable. I had reproached myself bitterly for subjecting her to the danger she had run from Schand's group, and I did not mean to expose her again to peril.

"You won't have to stay here in prison long," I assured her. "Once I've found Schand and his accomplices and forestalled their use of my secret, it will not take me long to satisfy the police that I am really Dr. Percival Withers. My mother and Cornelia will prove it when they get here."

"Cornelia?" repeated Penny inquiringly. "Is that the Cornelia Herrick whose name was in the police circular? Who is she, Doc?"

For some reason that I could not fully understand, I had an odd reluctance to answer her question. But I was forced to do so.

"Cornelia is my fiancée," I said awkwardly. "We have been engaged for the last three years."

"Oh, I see," said Penny abruptly.

She appeared remarkably uninterested in the information, for she turned away from me.

"Okay, Doc. I'll stay here," she agreed quietly. "But you take care of yourself."

I was vaguely troubled by something in her attitude, but dared not delay in that place any longer. Returning once again to contraterrene state, I slipped back through the bars and walls to the sunlit street.

I started rapidly toward the nearest subway station. The two chemical supply houses that might furnish me a clue were both downtown. I believed that Schand would have Hogrim build projectors as quickly as possible, which meant that the myopic little professor might already have contacted those two establishments in search of the necessary terbium.

TWO blue-clad policemen were loitering outside the stairs of the subway, keenly surveying all who entered or left. My heart sank at sight of them but I plucked up courage, pulled my hat down over my eyes and went on.

Hurrying between the two officers, I started down the stairs. I looked back. Both policemen were staring at the bulge made by my compressed-air tank in my coat, and at my camera-like projector.

"That's him! That's Doctor Miracle!" cried one of the officers.

I could not hear the sound, of course, but could clearly read his lips.

They plunged down the stairs after me. As I burst down onto the platform, a downtown express was about to pull out. I ran right through the turnstile and leaped into the train. The officers, delayed by the necessity of inserting coins in the turnstile, were too late. The doors closed and the train pulled out before they could reach it.

I stood in the center of the swaying subway car, breathing hard from my exertions. The other people in the car paid me no particular attention,

for I had my hat still shading my face and looked not unusual.

But at the next stop, more people crowded into the car. I felt a certain alarm, for if they crowded me in my present contraterrene state, they would discover my strange nature. My fears were justified at the second stop. The influx of new passengers crowded me still further into a corner, and a fat, perspiring gentleman was crowded right *through* me.

I saw a woman's lips open in a scream. Her face was a mask of horror as she gaped at the partly congruent bodies of myself and the fat gentleman. Other passengers turned to look, and froze at the sight of us.

"Doctor Miracle!" the woman was screaming, the syllables easily visible as they fell from her lips. She pointed wildly at me. "It's him!"

The fat gentleman who had been crowded through me had just discovered his astonishing situation. In understandable panic, he scrambled wildly away from me, while the other passengers also recoiled hastily.

"Doctor Miracle! The murderer you can't touch!"

I could gather these and other cries from the faces of the horrified, panicky passengers.

My own predicament was a desperate one. The train was pulling to a halt. In a moment all these terrified people would pour forth, shouting for the police. I must leave the vicinity as rapidly as possible.

So, as the train rapidly decelerated to a halt, I made a leap right through the side of the car onto the station platform outside. I bounded up the stairs before the alarm could be raised, and emerged into the bright sunlight and thronging crowds of West 14th Street.

CHAPTER X

The Crisis

HASTILY, I put several blocks between myself and the subway station. Then I started southward, for the two chemical supply establish-

ments I sought were some blocks away.

"If I can only get to them without being recognized again!" I thought desperately. "I must avoid touching anybody or anything, for that will betray me immediately."

So as I made my way through the crowded streets, crossing over each time I saw a policeman, I made every effort to avoid any more accidents such as that in the subway. I gave all passersby a wide berth.

"Burck Chemical Corporation" said a welcome sign on a large brick structure some distance ahead. It was one of the two places I was seeking, and my heart bounded with hope as I approached it and entered.

I surreptitiously switched out of the contraterrene state, and pulled my hat down over my eyes as I made inquiry of a clerk.

"Terbium?" he repeated. "No, we have no pure terbium at present. It's odd you should ask for that rare substance. Only a little while ago we had an inquiry about terbium from another gentleman, who wanted a small amount to complete an apparatus."

Professor Hogrim! I knew at once that the other inquirer had been the evil little foreign scientist. Hogrim, working from his photographs of my invention, must already have built another projector and needed only the terbium electrodes to complete it!

"How long ago was he here? Where did he go?" I cried tensely.

The clerk stared.

"Why, I directed him to the Waring Chemical Company, which is the only other house handling the stuff. It wasn't long ago."

I literally ran out of the place and feverishly hastened toward the Waring establishment, several blocks away. It was the other chemical house I had known as a possible source of terbium, but a malign fate had caused me to inquire at the wrong place first.

As I approached the tall building that housed the Waring company, I shrank back suddenly into a doorway. Out of the chemical establishment ahead was hurrying a small, gray figure of a man with heavy-lensed

spectacles whom I recognized instantly as Professor Hogrim.

"He's got the terbium!" I thought excitedly. "Now if I can just follow him back to where the other spies are—"

The little foreign scientist set off with great rapidity in a southerly direction. I took the precaution of switching back into contraterrene state before I edged out of the doorway and followed him.

Cautiously keeping back amid the throngs of pedestrians, I trailed Hogrim for almost a dozen blocks southward. The fact that he did not utilize a taxicab argued that he wished to leave no trail behind him.

Hogrim headed for a rather shabby district somewhat east of the financial section. He turned into a street of dingy apartments and mercantile establishments, and I followed with sharpened eagerness.

But my excitement over the pursuit was my undoing. I did not notice, as I stepped hastily across a street, that a large automobile was racing toward me. Before I could glimpse it coming, the big sedan bore down upon me.

I turned just in time to see its radiator looming up before me, and the horrified face of its driver. Then the car ran *through* me. In my contraterrene state, I was not harmed in the least. But the crowd on the sidewalk who had expected to see me instantly killed was now electrified.

"Doctor Miracle!"

I saw the outline of those familiar syllables on lips all about, as people began to shrink away from me in panic.

Two policemen came running from the nearest corner, drawing their weapons and leveling them at me. I was definitely discovered.

"Stop!"

I KNEW that was what the officers were shouting at me as I turned to get out of there. I paid no attention. One of the policemen fired his pistol, but of course the bullet passed harmlessly through me and chipped the brick wall alongside.

The crowd was now in intense excitement, pointing at me and uttering

cries I could not hear. Desperately I ran right through the ring of terrified spectators, my eyes searching for Hogrim.

But Hogrim had disappeared from the farther end of the street, when I reached it. The little scientist had been too far away to hear the clamor attending my discovery. He had turned in either at one of the shabby buildings along the street, or into another street.

Helplessly I stared back and forth along the street in search of him. I had lost him! He must be somewhere in this immediate neighborhood; here somewhere must be Schand's new headquarters. But where?

"Why did I have to step in front of that car and give myself away?" I groaned mentally.

As I stood staring helplessly, the two policemen had caught up to me. That they had summoned help was now clear, for Police Department automobiles began to race into the street and disgorge many officers.

Some of the policemen authoritatively waved back the crowds, while the others, led by a white-haired bulldog-faced captain, gathered in a circle around me. Then the captain strode forward to grab me.

His grasping hands went through me without resistance, of course. I could see the bewilderment and incredulity on his face. He tried to put his handcuffs on my wrists but with no more success.

I paid these excited officers but little attention. My whole mind was bent on the problem of finding Hogrim and his superior. Of course, I could have returned to my normal state, surrendered to the police and asked them to search the district for the spies. But I knew too well from experience that they would be skeptical of the spy angle and would triumphantly haul me off to prison at once.

I started forward along the street, meaning to search the whole district myself for Basil Schand and Professor Hogrim. I *must* find them before the little professor completed building his projector!

"Cut him off—don't let him get away!"

I know that was what the police captain must have shouted, for as I began to move off, the officers rapidly formed a solid ring around me.

I walked right through them, of course. The captain's face became purple, and I guessed that he was uttering oaths of rage at his own impotence.

"Follow him!"

That was evidently his order now, for the scores of policemen who had now gathered, and also the dozen cruiser cars in the street, all began to trail after me closely.

There ensued a most amazing scene. My intention was to search back and forth amid these streets until I found Hogrim and Schand. The police, who could not arrest me any more than they could arrest a shadow, were determined to keep me in their sight every minute, doubtless in the hope that my peculiar power would fail me.

"So much the better," I muttered to myself. "If I can find Schand and his accomplices, I will have led the whole Police Department of New York onto them!"

It really looked as though most of the department was massed around me as I continued my search. Hundreds of officers now swarmed about, with pistols, sub-machine guns, tear-gas bombs and every other kind of weapon. Cruiser cars went ahead in the streets, forcing back the curious crowds. For the crowds were increasing in size every minute.

I started walking into each shabby apartment building along the way, sticking my head through the solid door of every suite to inspect it. There were some curious effects, as people looked up to see my head appear through their door.

One bleary-eyed gentleman in an advanced stage of intoxication rose from his bed and dived through the window at the sight. Fortunately, being a first-floor tenant, he fell but a few feet outside. Many people fainted. Children screamed.

BUT Basil Schand and young Krebs and Professor Hogrim were not in any of these places. I

grew tired, and my hopes sank lower. And the police still grimly clung to me, entering every building with me, watching me.

As I emerged from the sixth or seventh building, I felt a queer dizziness and a sharp little pang in my lungs. I had not noticed that my breathing had in the last minutes become more and more labored.

"Good heavens, if my air supply—" I started to exclaim to myself.

My voice was stricken dumb as I hastily inspected my air tank. Its air supply was almost exhausted! In a few more moments, I would stifle for lack of oxygen unless I returned to my normal state and pumped a fresh supply of air into the tank.

But if I did that, the moment I left the contraterrene state the police would seize me, and all hope of finding Schand and his fellow-conspirators would be lost!

CHAPTER XI

Contraterrene Combat

MY predicament was so appalling that for a few moments I stood rooted upon the sidewalk. My feelings must have been evident in my expression, for the bulldog police captain who had been narrowly watching me seemed to grow hopeful that I was in trouble.

He and his men, for the hundredth time, attempted to seize me. The effort was attended with no more success than at first. But now I started in a rapid run along the street away from them.

"If I can give them the slip long enough to return to normal for a few minutes, I can pump air into the tank!" I thought.

But as I ran, the police and the cruiser cars kept pace with me. They had no intention of letting me out of their sight again. And running was an agonizing effort to me, for the trickle of air from my tank was now diminishing by the minute.

I ran through a solid brick building in the middle of the block in an

effort to give them the slip. But they had apparently foreseen this maneuver, for the cruiser cars raced around into the next street as I emerged into it. Again I tried the stratagem, and again without success.

I was now breathing in great gasps, my starved lungs crying for oxygen. The police, sensing a crisis, made repeated efforts to grasp me. Then, on the point of surrendering to them, I glimpsed in the next block the impressive structure of a large bank, and it gave me an idea.

I summoned the last of my strength and ran toward the bank. The police were close at my heels as I staggered into the establishment's impressive marble lobby. Wild excitement broke forth among bank officials and clerks as the cries of the policemen warned them that Doctor Miracle had entered their place of business.

My lungs were a rasping agony, my sight was blurring, as I peered around. I discovered what I was searching for, the massive doors of the bank vault. They were closed and locked, for it was late afternoon and the establishment had closed its business for the day.

I stumbled forward, through the massive steel doors into the spacious interior of the big vault. An electric light inside it illuminated long shelves, stacked with steel chests of currency and valuable documents. But I paid this stored wealth little heed.

With numb fingers, I touched the projector switch and brought myself back to normal. Life-giving air rushed into my lungs. I stood for some moments breathing in great gasps, there inside the big vault.

"That was close!" I panted in relief. "But I had better hurry, before they get in here—"

I could guess that the bank officials would be frantic at the thought of me inside their precious vault. They would make all haste to get in at me.

So I rapidly began pumping air into my small aluminum tank, by means of the little hand pump that was an integral part of it. Each moment I expected the police to burst in, but they did not.

It occurred to me that time-lock of the great vault must be set. This allayed my fear somewhat, but I continued to pump hastily. The great vault contained more than enough air for my purposes. When I had the tank again full, I switched back into contraterrene state and walked out.

As I emerged into the lobby, I found it jammed with police and bank officials in the highest state of excitement. They had evidently been making frantic efforts to open the vault. One rotund, richly dressed old banker appeared to be in some sort of convulsion.

"Get him!" The cry was plain on the lips of the bulldog-faced police captain, as he led his men in a rush toward me.

They were badly crestfallen when they found that I was still insubstantial and uncatchable. No doubt they believed that I had stuffed my pockets with the bank's wealth while in the vault.

For they followed me in an even greater number, as I went back to the street in which I had lost Professor Hogrim's trail. I again took up my weird search of the apartments along that street.

I FEARED that Schand and Hogrim and the other spies might have heard the alarm I was causing in this part of the city, and might have again decamped. On the other hand, I felt that the spies would not wish to venture forth into streets swarming with police, so I still hoped.

The police, as they accompanied me in grim escort, were trying one weapon after another on me. They used tear gas, which affected me not at all. They played fire hoses upon me, the water going harmlessly through my body. They shot one volley of bullets after another through me without effect.

I was horribly tired, and my hopes were waning as I neared the end of the shabby street. Yet I forced myself to enter still another apartment structure, to make still another search of its various suites while the police kept closely behind me.

I stuck my head through the panel

of a door on the third floor—and was electrified.

"By heaven, I've found them!" I cried in my excitement.

Basil Schand, Professor Hogrim, the dark-faced young man named Krebs and the bulking Otto were all in this apartment! Krebs and the little professor were peering worriedly from the window at the tumult and police in the street below.

Schand stood near a table on which was scattered a litter of scientific instruments, tools and materials. And the master spy now wore an air tank similar to mine, and was slinging around his shoulder a camera-like projector that was the exact duplicate of my own.

I perceived instantly that Hogrim had made his terbium electrodes and had completed his imitation of my projector. And Schand was getting ready to test it.

I plunged through the door into the room. Schand's plump figure whirled and his thick rimless glasses glittered amazingly at me.

Next moment, the door through which I had come crashed inward on its hinges. The police! A yell broke from Krebs' lips, and he drew his pistol and fired at the officers. A policeman's bullet instantly felled Krebs, while Professor Hogrim cowered back terrifiedly.

"They can't do this to us!" Otto yelled hoarsely, turning pale.

But Basil Schand was fumbling frantically with the switches of the projector he had slung around his shoulder. The police, rushing forward to grasp him, reached *through* him. Schand had become contraterrene like myself, to escape the officers!

"Now I have got you, you scoundrel!" I cried, and rushed forward toward Schand.

I grabbed for his throat, and it was as real and solid in my hands as my own body. For now that both of us were contraterrene, we were as real to one another as if we were both in a normal state.

Schand's plump figure squirmed in my grasp, his chubby face crimson with rage. He tore my hands from his throat and thrust me back.

I crouched to charge him again. Neither of us paid any attention to the excited police in the room, for to us they were as unreal as shadows.

Before I could rush forward again, Schand drew a pistol from his pocket and fired at me. The bullet seared my shoulder like a heated iron. For the weapon and its missiles had been changed to contraterrene matter in Schand's pocket, and a contraterrene bullet could wound a contraterrene man!

The shock and pain of the wound staggered me. But before Schand could fire again, I was leaping in at him. The remaining bullets in the weapon went harmlessly over my head as I forced up his arm with a fierce thrust.

Schand wrenched his arm free and brought the empty weapon down upon my head. My skull rang from the impact, and the plump spy tore himself out of my momentarily nerveless grasp. At once he ran through the excited police, out of the door.

I shook my head to clear it and hastily followed. The stairs of the building were jammed with officers, but Schand was running down through them as though they did not exist. I followed him in similar fashion.

When I emerged into the street, I spotted Schand hastening westward. Fiercely I took up the pursuit. Police and cruiser cars raced wildly after us. Yet the spy and I, in our contraterrene state, were for all practical purposes the only two men in New York.

SCHAND'S plumpness put him at a disadvantage in running. I began to overhaul him. With a final sprint, I caught up with him at the corner of two busy streets. I seized him.

His fists beat upon my face as I grasped his fat throat. In mortal combat, we swayed to and fro, through parked automobiles, through the massive walls of buildings, through even the frantic police and appalled pedestrians who crowded around us. We must have made a nightmare spectacle to the eye, in our deadly struggle.

"You fool!" choked Schand, as I held his throat in a throttling grip.

"You can't—"

His fists ceased at that moment to beat upon my face, and his thumbs jabbed toward my eyes. The agony of the pressure made me loosen my hold despite myself and reel back.

But as I was thus forced back, my clutching hands caught the feeder pipe of his air tank and tore it away. Schand, reeling staggeringly back toward the wall of the nearest building, turned suddenly purple in the face as the flow of air from his tank no longer reached his nostrils.

Suffocating as he swayed back, his fingers fumbled frantically at the switch of his projector to restore himself to a normal state and thus secure air. And even as his fingers found the switch, he was reeling back into the solid stone wall of the building.

"Look out—don't do it!" I yelled to him involuntarily.

It was too late. Basil Schand's body was half inside the stone wall as he turned the switch to bring himself back to normal.

Next moment came a terrific explosion that knocked me backward with tremendous force, at the very instant that I was switching out of contraterrene myself. I knew nothing more.

CHAPTER XII

Atom and Eve

WHEN I opened my eyes, I saw above me a white plastered ceiling. Dazedly I raised my head a trifle and found that I was reclining in a high, narrow bed in a sunlit, hygienic room that I recognized as having the general characteristics of a hospital chamber.

The movement of my head made me aware that I was sore in every muscle. I discovered that various bruises on my body were bandaged. Then I turned my head and perceived that the white-haired, bulldog-faced captain of police was looking down at me.

"I'm Captain Roberts," he introduced himself. "And everything's all right now, and you're not badly hurt, Dr. Withers."

"Ah, so you finally are aware of my identity," I mumbled.

He nodded heartily.

"Yes, indeed. Your mother and Miss Herrick identified you beyond all question. They're out in the reception room now."

I winced in dread. I could well imagine what my mother and Cornelia would have to say to me about my outrageous behavior.

"Am I under arrest?" I asked doubtfully.

"Not a bit of it." Captain Roberts laughed genially. "We know now that your story of foreign spies stealing your invention was the truth. For the man we shot and that little professor confessed the whole truth. Of course the head of the group, Basil Schand, was killed in that explosion."

He gazed at me with intense curiosity.

"What caused that explosion, Doctor? It blew Schand's body out of existence and made a tremendous hole in the stone wall of that building."

I shuddered as I remembered.

"It was because Schand returned from contraterrene state to normal state *inside* the stone wall," I explained. "Two masses of solid matter cannot occupy the same space at the same time!"

"But every time you returned to normal, there was air in the space in which you reappeared," the captain objected.

"I know, but air is a tenuous gas," I told him. "Reappearing in the air, my materializing solid body simply displaced the elastic air. But Schand's body, rematerializing inside the solid wall, couldn't displace the stone wall so easily. There was an explosion of jammed atoms that destroyed him."

And then I remembered.

"My projector—" I said anxiously. "Right beside you, Doctor," Captain Roberts reassured me, pointing to where it lay on a table. "And please never let any criminal get hold of it!"

"The War Department down at Washington is going to get it, Captain," I assured him. "I'm through forever experimenting with contraterrene matter."

I looked anxiously around the

room. "Where's Penny? You released her, didn't you?"

"Oh, sure, we turned the girl loose," he replied. "I suppose she went home."

I began to feel acutely disappointed. "I would have thought she might be here," I said crossly.

At that moment the door opened, and my mother and Cornelia entered. At sight of them, Captain Roberts hastily departed, promising to see me later about transporting the projector safely to Washington.

"Percival, I was so overjoyed to learn you were not seriously hurt," mother told me anxiously. "How could you have got mixed up in such a terrible affair? No Withers ever did anything like *this* before!"

"I'm sorry, Mother," I mumbled. "It all began as a mere experiment."

"Really, Percival, you must have been out of your mind," said Cornelia severely. "To appear in a cheap night club, and be chased by the police, and get entangled with spies—it will ruin your social standing in Plymouth. I am, in fact, considering breaking off our engagement."

I did not pay her much attention, for I was anxious to ask a question.

"Hasn't Penny been here?" I inquired earnestly.

"Penny? You mean that impossible young person you were associated with in the night club?" Cornelia said distastefully. "Yes, she had the effrontery to come here after her release from prison to see you."

"Where is she? Is she outside?" I asked eagerly.

CORNELIA'S nose tilted.

"You may be sure she is not," she declared. "Her attitude toward me was very offensive. When I pointed out to her that her association with you might easily blight your scholastic standing, and offered her a generous sum to deny all information to the newspapers about this disgraceful episode, she became quite insulting and departed."

"You said that to *her*?" I cried.

I thought of Penny Lewis—flippant, wisecracking, gallant Penny being so confronted—and a hot rage rose in me.

"You had no business talking like that to her!"

Cornelia's brows drew together.

"Really, Percival, I think I will break our engagement. You sound as though you were in love with that awful girl."

"I am in love with her and she's not awful, she's wonderful!" I shouted. "And—"

I stopped suddenly. Stunned, I repeated my own words.

"Why, I do love her. It's true!"

I started to scramble out of bed. My mother caught my arm.

"Percival, you're not going to see that girl. You must remember that you are a Withers!"

"Mother," I suggested gently, "would you like to see me become a bootlegger?"

"Oh, no, Percival!" she exclaimed in horror. "How can you—"

"Or a bareback rider in the circus? Or a newsboy? Or a hobo?" I continued relentlessly.

"Percival," she wailed, "what are you talking about?"

"Because," I continued softly, "the very next time you try to order my personal life for me, I shall become one of those things. Do you understand?"

My mother surrendered.

"Yes, I understand. Perhaps this girl is really a nice person, after all—"

But I was already out of the room, snatching up the contraterrene projector and taking it with me for safe-keeping.

When I reached Mrs. Martinsen's lodging house, I raced up the stairs and knocked excitedly on Penny's door. It was locked.

"Penny, let me in!"

There was a small silence, and then her voice came through the door.

"I can't see you now, Doc. I'm packing."

I was appalled at this reception.

"Packing? But Penny, you can't go away! I've got to talk to you."

"Sorry, Doc," came her light reply. "Maybe some other time. You're all out of your jam now, so everything's all right."

I was not to be turned away so easily. In a moment I had used the

projector to make myself contraterrene once more. I stepped through the door, switched back to normal—and then stared.

Penny was not packing. She lay on her bed face down, her yellow mop of hair bright in the sunlight. And when she rose startledly at my step, I saw that her blue eyes were bright with tears.

"Penny, you've been crying! Cornelia had no business saying such things to you! If I'd known—"

"Do you think that fiancée of yours is responsible for this?" Penny demanded belligerently. "You're crazy. I'm just nervous from all that happened, that's all. And I wish you'd go away."

"I won't go away!" I declared angrily. "Confound it, I came here to tell you I love you, and I'm going to do it!"

Penny stared at me wonderingly.

"Why, Doc, you practically swore!"

I was somewhat amazed myself at my use of near-profanity.

"Well, you drove me to it," I accused her. "Are you going to marry me and go back up to Plymouth with me—or must I proceed to even more emphatic measures?"

Penny's face softened but she shook her head.

"It wouldn't work, Doc. I'd be out of place in a college town, and I don't know anything about science, and—"

I saw that more emphatic measures were definitely called for, and I proceeded to apply them. I applied them with such assiduity that it was some moments before Penny could get her breath.

"All right, Doc, you don't need to go caveman," she protested. "But there's one thing you've got to promise me."

"What is that?" I asked eagerly. She pointed at the contraterrene projector.

"You've got to promise to get rid of that thing and not make any more. I want a husband I can lay my hands on!"

Next Issue's Novel: THE ETHER ROBOTS, by Frank Belknap Long

You owe it to yourself to try
A shave that starts your day in high!
Speed, ease, good looks are what you get
With money-saving Thin Gillette!



Outlast Ordinary
Blades
Two To One

Produced By The Maker Of
The Famous Gillette Blue Blade

4 for 10¢
8 for 19¢

Save Extra Money! Get The Big New Economy Pack, 12 For 27¢

SCIENTIFACTS

INCREDIBLE BUT TRUE

THAT VITAMIN'S HERE AGAIN

FROM a casual glance at the vitamin ads today a homespun philosopher is apt to wonder how the human race managed to survive long enough for science to dig up this energetic little fellow and give us a vitamin complex. But while you are taking your daily dose or drinking your orange juice with greater diligence, be advised that science hasn't stopped with dosing mankind.

Dr. W. E. Lammerts of the University of California faculty has grown peaches from pits in two years by the use of vitamin B₁.

He abstracted the kernels from the pits, soaked them in a solution of sugar, agar and the vitamin complex until they sprouted, then gave them nursery care until the seedlings were nine months old, at which time they were ready for planting in the orchard. And by their second birthday the young trees bore fruit.

After five years of experimentation, Dr. Lammerts attributes his remarkable success to vitamin B₁—not to California climate.

READY FOR A BIG SMOKE?

A GENUINE tobacco plant which grows to the size of a tree has been discovered on the Juan Fernandez Islands off the coast of Chile. Seeds of this plant planted last year in the Berkeley botanical gardens are already more than six feet high.

With tobacco the size of logs, it would take a northwoodsman like the mythical Paul Bunyan to "roll your own."

HOW'S YOUR SUGAR, HONEY?

WHAT with using sugar to make alcohol and explosives, comes now a process to make blackstrap molasses into an automobile fuel with a

high octane rating. The present cost of manufacture is about fifteen cents per gallon, but it's a success.

All we need now is someone to make rubber out of maple syrup, and



we'll have the Axis licked in the sweetest sort of way.

Incidentally, William A. Sharpe, American chemist, is developing a high-protein rubber from the common milkweed. It is claimed that extensive planting of this nine-month crop could make us independent of foreign rubber sources in two years.

SHOCK 'EM DEAD

ELSEWHERE in this present issue of THRILLING WONDER STORIES you will run across a story which features the use of a .22-caliber magnum rifle. It is no exaggeration. At his ranch near Topanga Canyon out of Los Angeles, Mr. Ralph Waldo Miller will build you a Miller Magnum .22-caliber rifle for about \$500 that will drive a small slug through a sheet of armor plate where a standard regulation rifle of larger caliber—even the new Garand rifle—will only dent the plate.

The secret is in the 70 grains of powder in the special-shaped magnum cartridge as compared to the less than 3-grain charge in the average .22 shell. This imparts a muzzle velocity to the tiny bullet of more than a mile per second, twice that of the heavier army bullet.

Practically no allowance need be

made for windage or trajectory, the bullet having a drop of only four inches per 400 yards as compared to the usual drop of four feet in the same distance. Only a scratch or a crease from a magnum bullet is necessary to insure death as it kills instantly by hydrostatic shock. Just a whiff from one of these bullets would knock the socks off a Jap.

ARE YOU ON A MILK DIET?

BESIDES being the most nearly perfect food in the world for man, and yielding casein for myriad uses including that of making good



paper, milk now yields clothing for mankind. Aralac, a new textile fiber, is processed from cow's milk, and already felt hats, slacks, dresses and other apparel are being manufactured from it.

J. Wellington Wimpy knew where of he spoke when he said, "The cow is a noble animal."

WON'T YOU WALK INTO MY PARLOR . . . ?

THE Black Widow spider at last comes into her own. At her home in Yucaipa, California, Mrs. Nan Sanger has a spider farm where she harvests spider silk for national defense.

The silk is strong and tough and is used for cross hairs in the aiming devices of telescopic rifle sights, bomb sights, and surveying instruments. Each healthy spider contributes 500 feet of silk in five "silklings" before being honorably discharged from service.

NATURE'S JENNY HALIVER

EVER since that distant and dim prehistoric day from whence came the legend of ogres—who were probably the ugly flesh-eating Nean-

derthal men—the human race has treasured myths, like the unicorn, the great sea serpent, the fire-eating dragon and such.

When freaks or oddities were not forthcoming in sufficient or startling quantity, man has proceeded to nature-fake in the manufacture of frauds such as the Cardiff Giant, the Japanese mermaid, etc. These fraudulent manufactures are known as "Jenny Halivers." The origin of this term is rather obscure.

But the most imaginative biological forger never thought up a more incongruous creature than the little hippocampus, or sea-horse. This weird marine creature has its skeleton on the outside like an insect, a head like that of a horse, the gills of a true fish but on the outside like a frill, a prehensile tail like that of a monkey—by which it grips the stems of seaweed, and a pouch on the under-side for carrying its young after the manner of the kangaroo. To make things more confusing, the male does the carrying of the papoose. And hippocampus swims in an upright position like a one-legged man stumping along.

Even Mother Nature must stand perplexed at this bizarre specimen she has assembled. All he needs is a torpedo and to be turned loose in search of Nazi pig-boats.

QUICK ELECTION RETURNS

THE first presidential election returns ever to be broadcast by



radio were sent out from KDKA, at Pittsburgh, on the Harding-Cox campaign of 1920.

The politically minded inhabitants of the planetary system, if any, of the nearest fixed star—Alpha Centauri—could have tuned in on the news sometime in 1926. They are just now getting the results of the 1936 Roosevelt-Landon election, providing they're listening.

What we need is a spatial Pony Express to beat the old pioneer rate of travel of 186,000 miles per second.

IT'S A PLANT

IF YOU were asked to name the most universally used and useful plant that grows, what would you say? Cotton? Rice? Sugar cane? Corn? Coconut palm? Trees? Whichever you chose, according to Dr. Willard M. Porterfield, Jr., you would be wrong.

The correct answer is—bamboo. Not only has bamboo figured predominantly in the history of tropical and Asiatic countries, but it has spread all over the world in the form of food, shelter, implements, weapons, basketry, bridges, conduction pipes, paper, ornaments, artwork, and thousands of specialized articles.

The very latest wrinkle in the use of bamboo is the bamboo basket devised by the Chinese to protect their most important buildings from Japanese bombings.

A three-story framework of this utilitarian plant is constructed atop highly important buildings and all three floors are loaded with cut bamboo. When a bomb hits it is exploded before reaching a vital spot, and all

that results is a shower of bamboo splinters. Which ought to land in the pants of the Nipponese raiders. Bamboo poisoning is not a laughing matter in any man's anatomy.

TOPSY-TURVY PRODUCTION

TO CAP the climax of our record for mass production in the United States, the latest bit of Yankee ingenuity is the trick of building steel-bottomed boats faster by building them upside down!

Navy patrol vessels 173 feet long are now being turned out at the rate of one ship per week instead of one ship every six weeks by the employment of this method. The secret is that the ship's plates can be welded on so much quicker and easier in this upside down position, after which the ship is righted in its cradle for deck structure and then slid down the ways five weeks ahead of the old schedule.

Thus, we are speeding up production to where we can turn ships out faster than the Axis can sink them. But that isn't the point. Admiral Nimitz, in collaboration with all available branches of U.S. and Allied forces, is working on the problem of turning the Jap and Nazi vessels upside down.

COMING NEXT ISSUE

STORM IN SPACE

A Novelet of Spatial Combat

By ROSS ROCKLYNNE

AND MANY OTHER STORIES

NO FINER DRINK...





JESSIFER RIDES AGAIN

By NELSON S. BOND

The System's Most Unpredictable Robot Pins Back the Ears of Blaze Hogden, Cruellest Space Pirate in the Void!

CHAPTER I

Pilot Jessifer

JESSIFER got us into the mess, but it was Cap Hawkins' fault in the first place. As skipper of the *Andromeda*, he should have kept a closer check on the bridge. But what with the monotony of our long journey and the way the space-ships are equipped nowadays—with grav shunts and meteor deflectors and all that stuff—I guess Cap figured it was safe to unlace a trifle.

Anyhow, along about 8.03, Solar

Constant Time, he came wobbling up to my turret and plumped himself into the only comfortable chair.

"Well, Sparks," he said, "do you still figure you can punch holes in the good old Ruy-Lopez opening?"

"That," I told him, "depends on who's pushing the white pieces. If it was Gilchrist, now, or maybe the ghost of Capablanca—"

The old man snorted.

"Get out the chessboard and shoo the moths outa your wallet, Bert Donovan! I'm gonna teach you a lesson. Two credits a game?"

"Make it easy on yourself," I

*A
Rollicking
Novelet
of the
Future*



"The Thing is crushing me, get me out of here!"

grinned, starting the usual routine.

The skipper's one of the grandest guys who ever navigated ether, but he's not half the chess player he thinks he is. I had made my nightly contact call to Pallas and was now technically off duty.

So I cut the switches, got out the set and pulled up a chair. The old man appropriated white, as usual, lined up his warriors with grim determination, studied them briefly, then pushed one forward.

"Pawn," he announced, "to KR-four."

I stared at him.

"Maybe I ain't hearing so good? What was that opening you wanted me to defend against?"

"The Ruy-Lopez," stated Hawkins with simple dignity. "An ancient and classical gambit which ought to be instantly recognized by any student of the game."

"That's what I thought," I said. "Only maybe I've been reading the wrong literature, 'cause in every book I've ever seen, White opens the pawn to King's four."

"Stop quibbling," snarled the old man testily, "and play chess! Trouble with you is, Sparks, you ain't got no imagination. This is a little variation I invented myself. Go ahead. Your move."

So you know how chess is. We hunched over the board like a pair of stiffs on a slab and began concentrating. And every once in a while, one or the other of us would get around to pushing a piece. But mostly we just studied the pieces and tried to look intelligent.

But pretty soon the fascination of the game did grip us, and we forgot who and what and where we were, and what time it was, and in fact everything but the maneuvers of our little black-and-white armies.

I was only dimly aware that after a while, someone else entered the turret quietly and sat down to watch. Later on, when the skipper was trying to think his way out of a corner I'd jammed him in, I glanced up and noticed that our audience now numbered two, the newcomer being Bud Wilson, second mate of our space-

going scow.

Even then it didn't dawn on me that anything was out of the way. Until some time later, when the turret door swung open for still a third time and the voice of First Mate Dick Todd sounded off.

"Look natural, don't they? Who stuffed them?"

THE old man, who had a bad case of goose pimples anyhow, feeling the cold breath of defeat blowing down his spinal column, looked up, bridling.

"Quiet, Mr. Todd! And I'll thank you to show more respect when making comments on your senior officer—Hey, wait a minute!" His eyes roamed the room suddenly. "What's going on around here? Who's on duty?"

Our three guests stared dazedly at him, then at each other.

"Wh-why, I thought Wilson was!" Todd said.

"Ross, aren't you?" Wilson put in.

"Why, Martin, I think!" Jerry Ross stammered.

"Martin," stormed the old man, "is in sick bay! Do you mean to tell me the *Andromeda* is hopping the Belt without a living soul on the bridge?"

"It's not as bad as that, sir," said Todd. "We're out of the Belt, space-bound for the Jovian system. I-I'll go topside right away, sir!"

And he started for the door. But at that moment came an interruption. The turret visiplates glowed and the intercommunicating audio rasped into sound. The sound was the voice of Chief Engineer McAndrews, more prickly with Scottish burr than a cactus bed.

"Sparrrrks," he rolled, "is th' Skipper oop therre?"

"Wait a minute," I said, "and I'll ask him!"

"Nane of your lip, yoong mon," growled the Chief. "Wi' ye be kind enough to ask him what the devil's goin' on in the control turrret?"

Cap Hawkins moved to the audio plate.

"What do you mean, Chief?"

"Ah! Is thot you, Captain? Weel, I rrregret to infairm ye, sorrr, that

one of your mates has gone stark, staring looney! He's been nigh drivin' us daft doon here in the engine room. 'Full speed ahead,' he signals. Then, 'Bank sharp left on the verticals.' Then 'cut in the velocity intensifiers,' cooms the order.

"I make a respectful query, as is my richt as chief engineer. 'What for, sorrrr, please?' An' does he onswer like a sensible creature? No, sorrrr! He says only one thing. He says, 'Pwee,' Captain! 'Pweee,' he says. 'Pweee! Whorrooooh!'"

My heart sank. Jessifer! And the others understood too.

"Sacred stars!" Todd gasped.

"That fool robot!" Cap Hawkins roared. "He's grabbed the controls again! Come on, everybody, quick!"

And like five quanta whisking through space, the gang of us busted from the turret and hightailed it through the ship, up the ramp to the bridge.

* * * * *

Maybe you know about Jessifer? He was left as a legacy to Cap Hawkins by the skipper's wealthy, scientifically minded Uncle Lester when that old gentleman lifted gravs to the pearly gates. Jessifer had been a shocking disappointment to the skipper at first sight—and first sound. He wasn't even a new robot.

He was an old and rather rusty 2189 model. An early, experimental anroid type with two arms, frontal visual apparatus, and manual control buttons. He was so out of date that he had knee-action stride instead of rollers, and his manufacturers hadn't even equipped his footsoles with rubberoid plates.

BUT that wasn't the worst of it. Jessifer's creator had packed the animated tin can with an audio-diaphragm, into which had been tucked more old saws than you could find in a carpenter's tool box. Jessifer was a sort of metallic Poor Richard. Every time he opened his yap, he gave with the moral mottoes.

"Be good and you'll be happy."
"Honesty is the best policy."
"Birds of a feather flock together."
"The rolling stone gathers no moss."

"Many a mickle makes a muckle."

These were but a few of the thousand-odd assorted adages Jessifer could—and did—haul out of his verbal grab bag.

So Cap Hawkins' first inclination had been to melt his robot bequest down into a wheelbarrow load of charm bracelets. Fortunately he had yielded not to temptation. And we were all sharing the profits now of Uncle Lester's strange legacy.

For it had turned out that Jessifer was more than a gabby robot. There was encased within his cranium a hand-forged box, which made of him an automatic radium detector.

By seizing the controls of the *Andromeda* forcibly a few months ago, guiding the ship to a tiny asteroid which was nothing more or less than a mountain of pure pitchblende, and snagging said chunk of wealth on our tractor beam, Jessifer had made each and every one of us financially stable.

The proceeds had enabled Cap Hawkins to buy the *Andromeda* from the Corporation and set us up in business as a crew of congenial and independent prospectors.

Now Jessifer was at it again. And while we had no objection to his leading us to still another gold mine in the void, we weren't overly enthusiastic about the time he had chosen to do it. Or the method he had employed.

There's something eerie and a little bit terrifying about scudding through space, with nothing more intelligent than an assortment of coiled wires, tubes, and gadgets pushing the keys of the control board.

So we headed for the bridge. And—just as we had feared—there sat Jessifer in the pilot's bucket seat, methodically plunging the bank-studs, eyes glowing with a pale green luminescence, meanwhile emitting those happy little "pwees" and "pwaas" and "whorooms" which were his way of heralding the nearby presence of radioactive ores.

"Now, see?" Cap Hawkins roared. "This is what comes of everybody deserting their posts at once! Todd, get him out of here!"

Dick Todd stared and turned a

somewhat grayish shade around the corners of the mouth.

"W-who?" he stammered. "M-me?"

"Well, somebody!" stormed the skipper. "Sparks, you call yourself an electrician! What can you do about it?"

"If he had a plug," I offered worriedly, "I could unplug his motor—if he had a motor. Cap, there ain't nothing I can do about it! The button that turns Jessifer off-and-on is amidships on his tummy.

"But with him sitting in that chair, I can't reach it. And when that robot's duty bent—" I shrugged. "But what's all the fuss about, anyhow? He'll quiet down as soon as he finds the radium for us. And we'll be that much richer."

"We-e-ell—" the skipper said dubiously.

But he had no time to make a decision. For Dick Todd, who had sprung to the perilous, now whirled to face us, eyes bulging.

"Skipper!" he cried. "The velocity intensifier!"

"Mm-m," grunted the skipper. "McAndrews said it was on."

"I know! But it's been on for two hours! We're nowhere near the asteroid belt any more! We're—we're blasting as fast as we possibly can toward—Jupiter!"

Jupiter!

MY LEGS turned to water and started trickling into my shoes. Man's dominion over the Solar System is an almost complete thing. He has outposts on all the inner planets and on almost all the outer ones, including far, frigid Pluto. But there is one child of the sun upon which man has not yet been able to establish a colony.

The monstrous planet Jupiter, whose mass is so vast, whose gravitational attraction so powerful that even the latest and best-equipped spacecraft cannot approach it, without being gripped and dragged headlong to a swift and terrible death—that planet remained unconquered.

Even as this startling truth struck our minds, there came corroboration from the space through which we

hurtled. Something like a shudder passed over the ship. For an instant my knees sagged beneath me, as extra gravs tugged at my frame.

Then the ship, like a released catapult, seemed to hurl itself forward at a speed even greater than that at which it had been traveling. And young Jerry Ross cried out almost hysterically.

"Dick's right! Jupiter's grav drag has caught us!"

Me, I'll admit I was scared witless. But the skipper has not spent thirty-odd years in space admiring the constellations. He knows things. And in a pinch, his reflexes act faster than those of any man I've ever met.

"No!" he thundered. "We feel the drag but we're not caught—yet! We can still pull out. But we've got to do it fast! Sparks—" He whirled to me. "You sure you can't reach that button and disconnect Jessifer?"

"Positive," I told him.

"A short circuit, maybe? Water?"

I shook my head.

"No can do, Skipper. Jessifer's as waterproof as a canvasback duck."

Cap Hawkins' jaw set grimly.

"Then there's only one thing to do. We must destroy him."

He tugged his flame pistol from his belt, raised it.

CHAPTER II

Space Warning

I GROANED. The old man was right. It was a plain case of destroy or be destroyed. But I couldn't help thinking that the bubbling hiss of Jessifer's metal carcass, fusing into molten puddles, sang lullaby and good night to all our dreams of rank and riches.

We had never learned what made Jessifer tick. We couldn't possibly ever build another long-range radium detector to take his place. When the Cap put him on the hot seat, all our fond hopes would be bashed in the head.

Bashed in the head! That was it! With a yell, I clawed at the skipper's

arm just as his finger tightened on the trigger-press. The unleashed bolt from the heat-gun flamed upward, missing Jessifer's rivet-tonsured scalp by inches, and spent itself harmlessly on a quartzite viewpane.

"Hold it, Skipper!" I squawked.

He stared at me wrathfully.

"What's the matter with you, Sparks? You gone off your grays? Time's wasting. We got to do something about this radium-rampaging robot and do it fast, or—"

"But maybe we don't have to destroy him completely," I hollered. "Cap, inside his skull is a mysterious little box which contains his radium detection apparatus. If I can just fetch him a healthy wallop on that spot, disconnect a few wires or something—"

As I spoke I had been searching frantically for something, anything heavy. I found what I wanted now—a murderous looking monkey-wrench. I closed in on the unsuspecting Jessifer.

"Todd, get ready to grab the controls!"

"Pweee!" squalled Jessifer. "Bwaaa—bwup—bwaa!"

I brought the wrench down with a resounding crash. Metal clanged. My hand tingled with the force of the blow. But a neat, triangular dent appeared at the base of Jessifer's skull, and he stiffened like the main attraction at an autopsy.

"Pweee!" he wailed once more, and then in a thin, dim, querulous tone, "Pwuggle! Cheep! Cheep!"

And his hands fell away from the controls. Todd reached over his back, started pushing studs frantically.

"Get him out of there!" he yelled. "Get him out of the way so I can sit down!"

I snorted.

"Me and what other three dericks?" I asked. "I kayoed him for you. Now you rattle him out of the way!"

But Jessifer left us no cause for argument. For at that moment his eyes, which had dulled when I struck him, began to glow again dimly. He rose. Uncertainly at first, then with rapidly growing assurance, he swung

toward the door of the control turret and stalked out. He looked neither to the left nor right. His arms were outstretched before him like those of a somnambulist.

We heard his metal soles clank rhythmically down the ramp into the bowels of the ship. As he disappeared plaintive little moans followed him.

"Cheep!" he garbled. "Pwuggle—cheep!"

But we had no time now to worry about Jessifer's difficulties. We had troubles of our own. Jupiter was perilously near. And though Todd was a good astrogator and the old man was at his side to lend him a helping hand, it was touch-and-go for a minute whether or not we'd break free of the mighty planet's ever-increasing gravitational drag.

But the *Andromeda* has good hypos. Todd jammed on full power, threw the jets into a left-arc reverse and gave her the gun. The old ship bucked and quivered. Her plates groaned in metal agony for a tense moment—

THEN once again we were sailing smooth and clear through the ether. The old man swept grubby fingers across a dripping forehead.

"Nice going, Dick! And you, too, Sparks! For once you had a sensible brainstorm! But where did Jessifer go?"

He got his answer immediately. But not from me. He got it from the wall audio, out of which the voice of Steward Doug Enderby came wailing like the lament of a heart-sick banshee.

"Captain Hawkins! Captain Hawkins!"

"Yeah?" snarled the old man. "What is it, Enderby?"

"J-Jessifer!" stammered our Better Homes and Garments expert. "Jessifer!"

"Never mind about him. You tidy up the bunks and let us take care of—"

"But that's just it!" moaned Enderby. "I can't, Skipper! He's just ripped the sheets and pillow cases from every berth in the ship! He's

raided the supply closets, too, and emptied them! He's building himself a nest in the middle of the laundry chute!"

"Sheets! Pillow cases!" The old man looked at me. "Laundry chutes! Sparks—"

"I don't know nothing about it," I said hastily.

"Then go learn something about it!" ordered the captain. "You conked him—now go find out what's the matter with him! Hurry up!" And he got that two-weeks-in-the-brig-without-pay look in his eyes.

"Aye, sir!" I said, meekly, and left the turret.

Everything happens to me.

Well, why prolong the agony? It was just as Enderby had said. I located Jessifer halfway down the laundry chute, nestling coily in an eerie he had concocted for himself out of every available sheet, pillow case, tablecloth, napkin and et cetera on the *Andromeda*.

He was crooning little murmurs of placid contentment, and when I tried to get near him, he reached out one steel-taloned paw and yanked off my shirtfront. One of the messboys, whom I had drafted to help me, lost an apron the same way.

I was stymied. I got a handbook out of my locker, "Maintenance and Operation of Android Robots," published by the Wertz-Ligon Human-droid Corporation, but I made the mistake of getting the book too near Jessifer.

While I was still leafing through the pages he reached out and plucked it from my hands. Then he did a crazy thing. He yanked the back off the book and hugged it to his bosom, disdainfully chucking away the printed pages.

That's when the answer dawned on me suddenly.

"Linen!" I said.

Doug Enderby looked at me as if he were afraid that I, too, might at any moment develop a yen for stray washcloths and towels.

"Come again?"

"Linen," I repeated. "When I conked him with the monkey-wrench I must have jiggled some of his wire

innards. I changed him from a radium detector into a linen collector!"

"Ridiculous!" scoffed the steward. "Impossible!"

"You like to bet a clean hankie I'm not right?" I asked him. "No? I thought not. O. Q., wise guy, watch this!"

I stripped down to my cotton civvies and walked toward Jessifer. Just as I had thought, he didn't pay me the slightest neverminds. He just continued to caress a soiled bath towel as if I weren't there. I strode right up to him, pushed the button on his tummy—and Mr. Jessifer went bye-bye without a murmur.

AFTER that, I got a couple of the strongbacks from the black gang to haul him up to my turret. In spite of what the old man says, I'm not a bad electrician. So I took Jessifer apart to see just how much damage had been done and what I could do to restore him to normal.

The whole job hinged, of course, on the contents of that little hand-forged box built in his cranium. It had a dent in it like a sailor's paycheck after a crap game. With some difficulty I pried the lid off, and stared aghast at the saddest looking accumulation of scrambled coils, tubes and wires I ever saw in my life.

Either that radium detection apparatus had been put together with magnificent delicacy or I don't know my own strength, because everything was a jumble now. A couple of springs popped out when I opened the box. The fragments of one broken tube tinkled merrily as they bounced around, cutting gashes in the tender foils of a goldleaf condenser.

About a yard and a half—or maybe it was a mile and a half—of wire came slithering out of the container, to twine itself around my wrist like creeping ivy.

A tridimensional jigsaw puzzle in amps and volts, that's what it was. But the very obscurity of it challenged me.

I got to work. I soldered here and I spliced there and I replaced a part in another place. I twisted and wound and rearranged. Some of it was guess-

work and some of it was common sense. A little of it was logic and a lot more was plain, everyday hunch.

After my first attempt I had three pieces left over with no place to go, which didn't look promising. But I backed away from Jessifer and turned him on experimentally with a long-handled forceps, just to see what would happen.

It wasn't a success. Apparently I had mis-hitched more than one set of wires, because I had entirely destroyed Jessifer's lust for life, liberty, locomotion and the pursuit of assorted objects. He didn't stir a step, nor did he make any passes. But his eyes did light up and he started to speak.

That in itself was the tipoff. Jessifer, as I have told you before, was in the habit of quoting adages. Somehow I'd shuffled his saws, because the advice he started emitting was a bit on the scrambled side.

"Ignorance," he assured me pleasantly, "is the best policy. A rolling stone makes a soft pillow. A fool and his money flock together. The wages of sin are soon parted. Birds of a—glup!"

I turned him off hastily, and took him apart again. And put him together again. And tried him out again. And—but why go on? It was a sad, sad situation. It seemed like every time I dissected Jessifer's activating cams, I discovered some new twist or wrinkle or gadget I hadn't noticed before.

I tried every wiring scheme in the books and I invented a few myself. But nothing I did returned the addled robot to his former state. Each time I completed a new reconstruction job, I would press his tummy button, oh! so hopefully . . .

Once he woke up with a yen for shoeleather. Another time his heart's desire was to form a collection of false teeth. (That was when Chief McAndrews got sore and offered to meet me in the boiler room after hours.)

A third time he went on the rampage after permalloy—just plain old-fashioned structural permalloy—which doesn't sound bad, until you

remember that modern spaceships are lined inside and out with that extra-durable metal.

Jessifer romped away from me and succeeded in happily tearing off about eighteen square feet of the inner hull, before I managed to subdue him with a crowbar.

Meanwhile Cap Hawkins who had long since forgotten that if it had not been for my last-minute inspiration, Jessifer would be nothing but a puddle of fused metal, was ranting and fuming his way into a nice quiet apoplectic stroke.

"Blankety-blank sizzle socko, Sparks!" he snarled. "You got to get that there robot fixed! Do you realize we're six weeks out in space beyond the Belt, and so far we ain't discovered an unprintable penny's worth of radium? We're going broke, and the food's getting low, and we're short on fuel!"

"I'm doing the best I can, Skipper," I said. "But—"

"Don't give me 'buts'; give me results! You call yourself an electrician—" Then he calmed down and tossed me a worried, sidelong glance. "I'm sorry, Sparks. I know you're trying, but I'm on edge. You see, loss of money ain't the only thing we got to worry about."

"No?"

"No, there's something else. Remember that code message which came through from Pallas last night? Well, I didn't tell the rest of the staff and crew, but that was a warning to be on the lookout for Blaze Hogden. The Space Patrol sighted him flying in-sun from Saturn a couple of days ago. They got an idea maybe he's heading for the Belt."

CHAPTER III

"Dead Men Tell No Tales!"

MY BROW creased.

"Hogden, eh?" I said. "The privateer?"

The skipper nodded, glowering.

"The dirtiest, showoffingest pirate who ever pushed space. A murder-

ing rat, if there ever was one. He's airlocked a dozen shiploads of men, and all with that slinky, slimy, treacherous smile of his—"

"I know."

I didn't want to hear any more about the exploits of Blaze Hogden. I knew his reputation. I knew, too, that the *Andromeda* was no match for the corsair's ultra-modern space cruiser, the *White Diamond*, which could outrun, outmaneuver, and outfight almost any ship in space.

So I got to work again. But feverishly. I was beginning, I thought, to understand what made Jessifer tick.

One of the many gadgets within that mysterious cranium box of his was a variable detectoscope equipped with a small vernier. That had been smashed when I conked the robot, and I had repaired it but hadn't experimented much in the way of turning the needle.

Now I felt reasonably sure that the position of the vernier determined the element to which Jessifer was attracted.

I studied the dial more closely, observing it under a magnifying glass, and whooped aloud with glee when I discovered that it was scored off into ninety-three separate, tiny little marks.

Now I knew I was at last on the right track. Those marks must correspond to the elements on the periodic table, beginning with hydrogen and Number One and running all the way up to the newly discovered Number Ninety-three, ekalastron.

The stuff we wanted Jessifer to be sensitive to was radium: Number Eighty-eight. So I carefully pushed the needle over to cover the sixth fine line from the end. Then I rechecked my wiring, put the box back into Jessifer's cranium and audioed the skipper on the bridge.

He scowled when he saw my excited face.

"Don't tell me," he moaned. "Let me guess! Jessifer's loose again! Blast your jets, Sparks, for two credits I'd—"

"Set 'em up in the other alley, Skipper," I chortled. "This time I've hit

the jackpot!"

You could almost see the old man's spirits rise from his eyelets to his eyebrows. "You mean—"

"Kee-rect!" I told him. "Come watch the fun. The curtain goes up as soon as you get here."

He was busting into my turret almost before the audio plate dulled. Behind him were Todd and Wilson.

"Well, gentlemen, I've proved my genius again," I said modestly. "Jessifer is restored to normal. He's regained his radium-finding proclivities."

"Y—you tested him, Sparks?" Cap said breathlessly.

"I don't have to test him. I know."

"I smell a Liberian in the lumber!"

Todd sniffed.

"Okay, wise guy," I snarled. "That wrist-watch of yours has a radium-illuminated dial, hasn't it? Well, then, you'll see. When I turn Jessifer on, you'll be the object of his affections! Ready, Cap?"

And I pressed the button on Jessifer's tummy.

A dim light gathered behind the robot's eyes. His audio diaphragm burped indelicately for a moment. And then in a loud, clear voice he proclaimed:

"Empty barrels make the most noise. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. A boy's best friend is his mother—"

Cap Hawkins whooped with glee.

"You've done it, Bert! By golly, he's moralizing again! You went and done it!"

"Necessity is the mother—" began Jessifer. Then he stopped. The light in his eyes brightened.

"Pweee!" he said. "Pweee — bwaaa—"

"Radium," I grinned complacently. "He smells it. Get set, Dick. Here he comes, ready or not."

FOR Jessifer had indeed turned toward Todd, and was moving swiftly across the floor toward the first mate, arms outstretched.

"Better loosen the straps on that wristwatch," I advised, "or he'll take your arm off with it! He means well, but he's not housebroken."

Todd hastily began to obey me. For Jessifer was upon him now, reaching out toward him. But the robot never touched the wristwatch. Instead, he reached his great metal paw into Todd's vest pocket, drew out a common, ordinary old lead pencil, and cradled it affectionately to his metal bosom!

"Pweee," he murmured happily. "Bwaa—bwup—bwaaa!"

Then, as if struck by a sudden thought or attracted by some faraway thing, he turned toward the door.

"Pweee!" Jessifer repeated joyously—and galloped out of the room.

Cap Hawkins stared at me, stricken.

"I—I thought you said he was fixed, Sparks?"

"But he is!" I yammered wildly. "I set the vernier. Th—there can't be any mistake! I don't understand why— Wait a minute! Is there radium in the hold?"

"One little chunk," the skipper said. "That rock he found for us inside the Eros orbit."

"Then that's what he's going after," I told him. "The pencil was a mistake. But shucks! I guess even a robot can pull a boner once in awhile!"

"But the radium's in a lead-cased room," Cap emphasized.

"Then maybe he's even more sensitive than he was before," I said. "I tell you I fixed him, Skipper."

Then the wall audio flashed on, and the startled face of Slops stared down at us. "Skipper!" he bawled.

"Yeah?"

"That robot, Jessifer—"

"Well, what about him?" Cap Hawkins bidded suspiciously. "Hah! So you've been stealing radium!"

"Radium, your Aunt Nelly!" bawled the cook. "That fool tin can on legs done busted into my galley and picked up my coal scuttle and ran off with it! How the devil do you expect me to cook without no fuel?"

Cap snapped off the audio dispiritedly and turned to me.

"Well?" he challenged.

I shook my head and tried to look happy, which I was not.

"Well, it's like I've always told you, Cap—"

"What do you mean—like you al-

ways told me? You've failed again, Sparks!"

"We shouldn't have a coal range in the galley," I backtracked hurriedly. "You know the old saying—there's no fuel like an oil fuel!"

What the skipper would have said then I don't know—and I don't much want to know. I suspect it wouldn't have been anything out of a Sunday School lesson. But at that moment came a violent interruption.

A high, whining percussion shuddered through the ship. Emergency klaxons clamored, and I lurched headlong across the turret with my mates, as whoever was on the bridge suddenly cut the *Andromeda's* velocity.

There came that giddy, weightless feeling of free-wheeling in space until the ship's automatic gravs took hold. Then the voice of Jerry Ross, third mate, grated shrilly in our ears.

"Cap Hawkins!"

"Now what?" roared the skipper. "Don't tell me that robot's done something else!"

"It—it's not the robot," quavered Ross. "It's a strange ship! She fired a Haemholtz blast across our bow and ordered us to lay to. I've cut velocity, Skipper—"

Hawkins' face blanched.

"Strange ship? What's her name?"

But I think I knew even before Jerry answered.

"The—the *White Diamond*, sir!"
Blitzkrieg!

I HAD heard tales of the speed and efficiency of Blaze Hogden's pirate crew. But such space legends, told over a glass of fiery *tekil* in an Outland joy-joint, are one with the tales you hear of the exploits of roving pioneers and the derring-do of Space Patrol Lensmen. As such they are to be discounted.

But there was no exaggeration in the stories I had heard about Blaze Hogden. I have said before that Cap Hawkins was a man space-trained to react swiftly in an emergency. But before he could frame a suitable reply, before he could even devise a plan of campaign, even before he had moved a step from my radio turret, there came the gripping crush of a

tractor-beam clamping on to the *Andromeda*.

The pound of mailed bulger fists echoed harshly on the airlock gates, then the asthmatic wheeze of that unit as we were boarded in midspace by strangers. Hogden and his men were in the ship. There was nothing to do but go meet them. And go meet them we did. Cap Hawkins led the way.

We found the boarding party, about twenty strong, standing in the lee-side runway. They had already thrown back their bulger helmets to breathe the natural air of the *Andromeda*. A harder-bitten crew I hope it may never be my lot to cast my gams upon.

The ragtag and bobtail of Earth's outlaw society, interspersed with a few sneaky chrysanthemums from Mars, Venusian giants and Uranian greenies, all armed to the incisors and looking very much as if they wished somebody would knock the chip off their collective shoulder—that was Blaze Hogden's gang.

Their leader, who was now nonchalantly slipping out of his bulky spacesuit, turned to face us.

"Ah! The captain himself comes to greet us! And two of his mates. You are extremely courteous, gentlemen. I presume"—he smiled meaningfully—"you are sufficiently intelligent to refrain from creating another—incident?"

"You're Blaze Hogden," Cap Hawkins said stonily.

There was no need for the pirate to answer. He had finished doffing his bulger now, and I gasped as I saw the emblazonment of that affectation which had given him his nickname.

From head to foot—literally from head to foot—the man fairly gleamed with those gems which were his particular love. The buckles of his sandals were made of diamonds. So were his gaiters and an ornate belt. There were diamonds on his fingers. A curiously wrought and intricate breast-plate blazed with the hues of a thousand rainbows.

Even his ears, Gypsy-like, had been pierced, and in the lobe of each he wore a tremendous jewel worth the

price of a king's ransom.

Thus Blaze Hogden, connoisseur and criminal, pirate and *precieux*, emblazoned himself even when following his outlaw pursuits.

Now he smiled suavely.

"I am indeed Blaze Hogden," the pirate told Cap Hawkins. "But I fear the advantage is yours, Captain. I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance. This," he stared about him appraisingly, "is a Corporation freighter, I presume?"

"It is," said the skipper bluntly, "not. This is my own ship, Hogden. Our own ship, I should say. The members of command and crew own it jointly and conduct it as a cooperative enterprise."

Hogden nodded, his ear-studs quivering lances of flame.

"But how convenient! One admires your social economy, Captain! Still—" His eyebrows lifted archly. "Still, speaking of economy, I presume you carry cargo? Now if I may be permitted to examine the manifest—"

"There is no cargo," said the old man stiffly, "and no manifest. It's too bad, Hogden, but your attack on this ship has been a pure waste of time. We carry nothing of commercial value."

UP to this moment, it had seemed to me that perhaps Blaze Hogden wasn't such a bad outlaw after all. There are some pretty decent ones, you know. Like Lark O'Day, for instance, a sort of Twenty-third Century Dick Turpin, who apparently roves the spaceways simply because he gets a kick out of it.

O'Day once quixotically waylaid the Corporation's largest and most magnificent spaceliner for the single purpose of stealing one kiss from the gorgeous, newly crowned Miss Universe.

But now I saw that Blaze Hogden was no O'Day, no Turpin, no Robin Hood. He was an animal. Veneered with superficial culture, encrusted with precious gems, perhaps. But vicious at the core.

His eyes darkened at the skippers' words, glittering as coldly as the gems

that bestudded him. His hands made restless motions at his side.

"In that case, Captain," he said ominously, "one may be forced to exact tribute in less—ah—pleasant ways. Quertzl, Mulgrave! Take two parties and search the ship! This man is lying!"

His voice snapped like the crack of a bow whip. His two lieutenants saluted smartly and led their parties down the ramp. Hogden turned to the old man.

"We will await them, sir, on your bridge. I wish to see your log."

And he herded us before him to the control turret.

Of course he found nothing. There was nothing for him to find in the log but Cap Hawkins' record of that one small chunk of pitchblende we had picked up a few weeks ago. And this was reported to him by his lieutenants, when they returned from their inspection trip of the holds a few minutes later.

The spindling Martian, Quertzl, simpered his report.

"Nossing below, ssir, but one small fragment of radioactive ore, worth maybe one ssoussand credits. We have transferred it to the *White Diamond*, ssir. We found nossing else."

"You see, Hogden?" the old man said levelly. "Now, sir, with your permission we will continue on our way."

It was a good try. I'll give the skipper credit for that. But he must have known even as he said it that it was no dice. For Hogden was furious at his aide's report. His mouth was a thin white gash, and his eyes tiny pinpoints of malevolence. Even so, he maintained a pretense of suave good-will, and there was a note of false regret in his next pronouncement.

"I'm sorry, Captain. I am most truly sorry. But you are a man of the world. Certainly you must understand that what you ask is impossible? Blaze Hogden has escaped the—shall we say 'long arm of the law'—up to now, simply because he has seen to it that he does not leave behind witnesses to testify against him. One regrets, of course."

He shrugged and let his words

dwindle off into silence. But it took no college education to see what he meant. He had stated, in his typically stilted and elaborate language, the credo of his predecessors, those bold buccaneers who pirated the Spanish Main:

"Dead men tell no tales."

CHAPTER IV

Robot on the Rampage

WELL—there it was. They say that when a man is hovering on the brink of the dark and nasty, his whole life unreeals before him like a strip of microfilm. If my experience counts for anything, that's the old malarkey.

I didn't have any visions of the infant Bert Donovan prattling at his pappy's knee, nor of a pimply-faced me pursuing the gals and gallons in my good old college days.

All I could think of in this moment was how different things could have been if they hadn't been like they were! And if that doesn't make sense, neither did my thoughts.

But there flashed through my mind, with wistful regret, a recollection of the brief, happy months we of the *Andromeda* had known together since Jessifer had become robot first mate on our scow.

Just three months ago, Uncle Lester's legacy had enriched us, made us owners of our own ship, sent us forth into the void hopeful of fame and fortune. And now here we were, one tremulous breath short of being chucked through the airlocks *sans* bulgers, to become frozen clots of carcass in the nothingness that yawns between the worlds.

Jessifer, upon whom we had pinned our hopes and dreams, was a smashed, motionless, useless lump of metal who spent his odd moments tracking down old lead pencils and scuttles full of—

I think I gasped. It came so suddenly that I know I started. I'm sure a cry of understanding must have leaped to my lips, because Blaze Hogden whirled on me, alert.

"Careful, my friend!" he warned. "Any hasty movement and—"

His needle-gun was half drawn from its holster. At my side I felt Dick Todd tense. There was a challenging eagerness in his eyes.

"Okay, Sparks!" they seemed to say. "I'm game if you are. If you think it'll help to rush him—"

But that's not what I was thinking. My mind was racing a mile a minute, and I talked in my excitement. Perhaps that was a good thing, because Hogden mistook my apparent incoherence for terror.

"B-but, Mr. Hogden, sir!" I stammered. "All of us? Must we all suffer the same—p-punishment?"

It went over perfectly. The pirate stared at me shrewdly, and parried my question as I had hoped.

"Why?" he asked. "Why, radioman?"

"Th-ther's something you should know!" I rattled desperately. "T-the captain hasn't told you everything. I'll make a bargain with you, Mr. Hogden. My life for the secret! If you'll promise me freedom—make me a member of your crew—"

Hogden smiled tightly and slipped his gun back into its holster. This was a language he could understand. The universal language of the good old double-x, at which he himself was a past master.

"One conceives that might be arranged, radioman," he said.

I knew that he lied as he said it. I was destined to share the same fate as my comrades. But if there was information he could get out of me first, he'd play ball for a bit.

"This secret, now. Just what—"

"This ship is equipped with the best and latest type of radium detector ever invented," I told him quickly. "We're the guys who discovered that pitchblende asteroid in the Belt a few months ago. Maybe you heard about us?"

THERE was no eager tenseness in Lieutenant Dick Todd's expression now. I could feel him drawing away from me in shame and disgust. Cap Hawkins' face turned a flaming scarlet.

His voice was thick with rage.

"Why, confound you, Sparks, for a sniveling coward!"

"Quiet, sir!" ordered Hogden peremptorily. "The young man interests me strangely. Go on, radioman. You were saying—"

"I-it's upstairs in my turret," I said. "A robot!"

"Robot?"

"A new kind of robot. It is attracted to radioactive ores. Will lead its possessor directly to them. Right now, its current is cut off. It's standing inactive. But if you'll have one of your men go up and press the small red button in his middle—"

Mingled doubt and greed were mirrored in the private chieftain's eyes. I saw his thoughts struggle there for a moment as I waited breathlessly. Then cupidity won. He turned to an assistant.

"Do as the gentleman suggests."

"Aye, sir!" The man vanished.

Cap Hawkins turned to Hogden with a dignity I had not known the old man possessed.

"As the captain of one ship to another, sir, I have a small request to make of you. Before you do—whatever you consider necessary, I would appreciate having a few moments in which to expunge from the log of the *Andromeda* the name of this person whom I once considered a shipmate and a friend.

"I would not have it known that we numbered among us a traitor."

Hogden smiled.

"Calm yourself, Captain. I rather admire the young man. He, as all men of intelligence, is an opportunist—What's that?"

He started. "That" was the voice of an animated Jessifer, reaching us from the turret.

"Pweee!" came the dim, faint, familiar sound. "Pweee—bwaa—bwaaa!"

Then it came louder, accompanied by the clang of steel-shod feet on the metal ramp. Jessifer drew nearer.

"Whorroooh! Whorroooh!"

I tensed, too, but for a different reason. My entire scheme hinged on Jessifer's reception. If Hogden and his men were startled into just a few seconds quiescence, until Jessifer did

that which I knew now, surely and certainly, he would do—

"Whorrooooh!" bellowed Jessifer. The clatter of his racing footsteps grew louder and nearer. "Whorrooh!" And he burst into the room.

Did you ever see a robot on the rampage? Did you ever see a derrick on a ten-day drunk, or a Juggernaut crazy with the heat? Or an express train running wild on a maze of tracks with no guiding hand at the throttle?

That was Jessifer—except that he wasn't running wild. He knew what he wanted, and he knew where he was going. He smashed into the control room, eyes blazing, voice bellowing, arms outstretched before him.

He rammed a half-dozen startled pirate underlings out of the way, and charged squarely down upon the shocked, uncertain Blaze Hogden.

"Whorrooooh!" he bellowed once more, ear-splittingly. "Whorrooooh!"

With wild metallic enthusiasm he picked up the pirate chieftain and strained him to his armor-plated breast.

Then—"Pweee!" said Jessifer contentedly. "Pweee!"

Vainly the outlaw tugged at his needle-gun. Vainly he kicked and struggled and strained for release. Jessifer's arms were steel, and his embrace, though affectionate enough, was vise-strong.

NOW had come the moment to act. I stepped forward to confront Hogden's benumbed followers.

"Put up your guns!" I commanded. "No—chuck them in the corner of the room. Over there. Todd, gather them up. If a single man of you moves a muscle, your leader dies! Hogden, tell them to obey me!"

The pirate, whose face was slowly purpling from an overdose of Jessifer's endearment, gargled wild agreement.

"Do-do what he says!" he yammered. "H-hurry up! This thing's crushing me! Get me out of here!"

"Got the guns, Todd?" I asked. "Skipper, take that lethal-looking plaything out of Hogden's belt. He might try another of his crummy tricks. Jerry, call McAndrews. Tell

him to get the brig ready. We've got a party of twenty to entertain. And maybe a few more in the ship that's anchored to us."

I turned to Hawkins, grinning, and saluted.

"O. Q., Captain. The machines have landed, and the situation is under control!"

I'd like to be able to say that Cap Hawkins tottered forward uncertainly. But he wasn't that kind of a guy. All he had needed was a break. Now the break had come, and he was complete master of the situation. His commands were like the spat of machine-gun bullets. In less time than it would take to tell it, our erstwhile attackers were so much trussed beef for the storage bin.

All but Blaze Hogden. Hogden was still securely cradled in Jessifer's arms. Dick Todd jerked a thumb in his direction.

"How about the walking jewelry store, Skipper?"

Cap Hawkins permitted himself one of his rare grins.

"We-e-ell, let's let him play with Jessifer for a few minutes longer," he suggested. "They seem to be very fond of each other. That right, Jessifer?"

"Pweee!" said Jessifer happily.

And that was that.

Afterward, with the two-dozen members of the *White Diamond's* crew and command locked in the *Andromeda's* brig, and the pirate ship itself in tow on our aft tractor beam for the short hop to Mars and justice, the skipper called time out for explanations.

"I owe you an apology, Sparks," he confessed. "But one that I'll never be able to make proper, 'cause it ain't an apology for something I *said*, but for something I *thought*."

"Now I see that you knew what you were doing all the time. Somehow you knew that Jessifer would make a beeline for Blaze Hogden. Only—why? Jessifer was out of kilter. You saw that yourself. How did you know—"

"I didn't," I said. "But I should have, when we discovered that though I set the vernier to the sixth notch on

the element dial, Jessifer didn't turn into a radium detector again. I suppose I'd had so many failures, I thought this was just another in a long series. The solution didn't dawn on me till long afterward. Until it was almost too late."

"But radium is element Number Eighty-eight," said the skipper. "It's the sixth from the end."

"That's right. But it's not the sixth from the beginning! I fixed Jessifer okay, Skipper. The only trouble was—I read the vernier the wrong way! I should have started counting notches from the other end!"

The skipper's jaw dropped.

"Glory be!" he said. "I get it now! Element Number Six!"

"Hmm-hmm!" I nodded. "I guess we were all pretty stupid, but it paid off in the end. We didn't find radium this trip, but we've captured Blaze Hogden and his crew. The rewards offered for them ought to be worth plenty. Not to mention those rocks Hogden was dressed in! I expect we'll get our cut on those."

TODD moaned feebly.

"Excuse me for being a cretin, Sparks. But would you and the Skipper mind sharing your little secret? What's all this about Element Number Six? And why didn't Jessifer work right? And why did he come hightailing it for Hogden and pick him up?"

I winked at the old man.

"What this ship needs," I chuckled, "is a first mate with brains. Don't you

see, Todd? Jessifer was responsive to the stuff in lead pencils—graphite. And to the stuff in coal scuttles—coal.

"So it stood to reason he was going to be responsive to that wagonload of stuff Hogden was wearing—diamonds! Because every single one of them is made of the same simple element. Element Number Six."

Light dawned in Todd's eyes.

"Carbon!" he shouted. "Why, of course! Carbon!"

"Exactly," I said. "Carbon. And now the last of our troubles are over, because I just finished setting Jessifer to the proper notch a few seconds ago. Now he's a radium finder once more—"

Then—there it was again! Slops' frightened face in the visiplat, Slops' raving voice yammering over the audio.

"Skipper! Skipper, that crazy robot—"

The old man's eyes gleamed brightly.

"Radium! Is he hollering? Has he detected some radium, Slops?"

"If he has," squalled the galley ghou, "that dinner I just cooked for you is worth a million bucks! He's hollering, all right. But he's down here takin' a bath in a potful of tapioca! Is tapioca got radium in it?"

The skipper's outraged scream followed me down the ramp.

"Sparks! Confound you, Sparks, come back here!"

But he hasn't caught me yet. Jessifer was right. Discretion is the better part of pallor.

*An Ingenious Scientific Adventurer Goes
Back to the Prehistoric Past*

in

Tubby—Time Traveler

An Uproarious Story

By RAY CUMMINGS

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE





The ghostly apparition solidified into Blanning's counterpart

TIME TO REGRET

By WILM CARVER

*When Blanning Found Out That the Evil That Men
Do Lives After Them, It Was Already Too Late!*

BLANNING pulled back the shade and looked across the separating lawn into the window of his neighbor, John Anders. His thin lips grew thinner as he saw Anders and his wife sitting before their radio.

"Yes," Blanning muttered bitterly. "there you sit, enjoying your new radio that you bought with money that rightfully should have gone to me."

His pale, ice-blue eyes glared at the couple for a moment longer, then he released the shade and sank into a chair. With an expression of unreasoning hate on his thin, sallow face, he gave himself up to the enjoyment

of his usual evening's recreation—plotting to kill John Anders.

Blanning and Anders were employed in the same wholesale house. A promotion that Blanning had coveted and expected had gone to Anders instead. Blanning had forced himself to congratulate Anders, but his warped soul had seethed with bitter resentment that had gradually turned to blind and avid hate.

Unremittingly now, he schemed to take the life of the man that had "wronged" him. But Blanning was a cautious and cowardly fellow. He shuddered as he thought of the consequences of murder. The grim chair,

AN AMATEUR CONTEST PRIZE-WINNER

the leather cap and shaven head of the execution chamber. . . .

Blanning's eyes had been fixed unseeingly for some moments upon the blank, white surface of the wall across the living room. His subconscious mind had been trying to force an impression to his attention. Suddenly he started, and sat forward staring spellbound. A luminous, bluish haze had appeared upon the wall, as a scene fades in on a movie screen.

The bluish glow wavered and vibrated, and now Blanning saw that it was not on the wall, but was hovering in space a few feet from it.

"It's—it's shaped like a man!" Blanning gasped in awed fascination. "My God, am I going crazy?"

HE SPRANG to his feet and stood trembling. The ghostly apparition was solidifying. Now it looked like a human being shrouded in a cloak of flickering ozone.

Blanning shrank back in terror as the bluish light abruptly disappeared, to leave a man standing there in the middle of the floor.

"What—who are you?" Blanning gasped fearfully.

The stranger looked at Blanning with pale, ice-blue eyes. Eyes that were counterparts of Blanning's own. And, Blanning saw, the man's hair, features and entire makeup were amazingly like his own.

But there resemblance ended. The newcomer was garbed in clothing such as Blanning had never seen. A close-fitting tunic of soft-green, iridescent material covered his narrow chest and shoulders. Voluminous trousers of the same metallic-appearing cloth were gathered in at the ankle and tucked into short boots of dark-red leatheroid.

"What year is this?" the weird stranger asked in a rasping voice. Blanning realized that even the man's speech was greatly similar to his own.

"Why—it's nineteen forty-two," he replied uncomfortably.

The stranger's thin, brooding face lit up.

"Success!" he exclaimed exultantly. He raised his hand to his waist and touched a belt to which was attached

a small, black metal case. Blanning thought it was a portable midget radio.

"If I am correct in my calculations," the stranger continued, "it is about nine p.m. on the eighteenth day of February."

Blanning nodded dazedly. His visitor smiled thinly.

"I can see that you are—surprised," he said. "But my sudden appearance is very simple and natural, I assure you."

"Simple and natural!" Blanning exclaimed in sudden anger. "Who are you? How did you get in my house?"

"By means of this time machine."

The green-clad man touched the metal case at his belt.

"You're crazy!" Blanning protested, hoping that his words were true.

"Watch," his visitor directed and turned a pointer on the black case. Then he pressed a small button-switch. Slowly the bluish light shrouded him and he dissolved from view.

Blanning's mind reeled. It *couldn't* be true, and yet—

He gasped. The incredible stranger was reappearing. Presently he stood there, smiling ironically at Blanning's shaken look.

"I set the time machine for a few minutes in the future," he explained.

Blanning sagged into the chair and passed a shaking hand across his brow.

"Tell me what it's all about," he gulped.

"My name," the time-traveler began, "is Curt Stoll. I was born in two thousand A.D. and am thirty-seven years old. I was a technician in the United American Electronic Experimental Laboratory. During my spare time, I invented this time machine."

"My wife—she died a short time ago. So, not having anyone to dissuade me, I decided to take a trip through time. I set my time-belt for the twentieth century—and here I am."

"Amazing!" Blanning muttered, convinced. "But our remarkable resemblance—"

Curt Stoll looked thoughtful.

"What is your name?" he inquired. Blanning told him.

"Randolph Blanning!" Stoll exclaimed. "Was your mother's name McCaddy? And did you name your son William Valdo Blanning?"

"Why, yes," the confused Blanning replied.

STOLL bowed ironically.

"I," he said, "have the honor to be speaking to my great-great grand-

doubt there was—but the family tree is as follows:

"Your son will—er—*did* marry a Mary Bagwell. Their offspring married a Thomas Mabry. Their fourth child, a girl, married Henry Stoll. I am the happy result of that union."

"I—I don't believe it," Blanning rasped, scowling.

"I must say that you don't seem very happy to see your descendant," Stoll said mockingly. "I'm a bit dis-

Meet the Author of "Time to Regret"



Wilm Carver

I WAS born in a little town in South Carolina, the name of which I have forgotten, it's been so long ago—twenty-nine years, to be exact.

When I was two weeks old, my parents moved to Charleston, the site of the beginning of the Civil War. I went too. I got through grammar school, then formal education palled on me and I joined the Navy. I didn't stay there long, as I developed a slight tick in my ticker.

I mediocrely held a succession of jobs as clerk in a department store, upholsterer, horse-groom and deliveryman for a ladies' lingerie shop.

After a short term with the unmentionables, it dawned on me that life was too much with me, so I next turned up as a shadfisherman on the Edisto River. There, cottonmouth water-moccasins as large as my calf lay in wait for us unwary fishermen. After

a few narrow escapes from those babies, and a gunfight between rival moonshiners, in which I was an innocent though imperiled bystander, I became convinced that there was no future in shadfish, anyhow.

Followed years of aimless drifting through all of the Southern States. In New Orleans, I barely escaped getting married. I escaped because she married another fellow, who had a Buick—with white sidewall tires. That saved me. If the tires had been black, I would be two now. What white sidewall tires will do to a girl's heart.

My most vivid memory of that period is when I was marching through Georgia, doing odd jobs along the way. I was helping kill hogs in North Georgia, the locale of "Gone with the Wind." They didn't shoot hogs on that farm, they "knocked" 'em. That means beating the hogs in the head with a sledge hammer, till they are dead—of cerebral hemorrhage, as near as I could see. To this day, when I eat pork chops, I can hear the heart-rending shrieks of those slugged porkers.

I resigned from hog-killing and sought less soul-stirring means of fulfilling my destiny, if any.

Finally, I wound up in Florida. At present, I am in Jacksonville, pounding out fiction. **TIME TO REGRET** is the first that's clicked, so far.

I hope my yarn will be read with as much enjoyment as it was written.

—WILM CARVER.

father on my mother's side."

"You're insane!" Blanning gasped incredulously. "My son is only sixteen years old."

Stoll held up his hand.

"I once became interested in my family history. A genealogical research bureau looked up my esteemed ancestry for several generations back. Of course, they whitewashed the shady side, if any—which I don't

appointed in you—Grandpa!"

"It's so confusing," Blanning muttered doubtfully. "I'm only thirty-five."

"Amazing, isn't it, Grandpa?" Stoll grinned mockingly. "But I'm hungry. Open up a tin of vita-jelly and a package of mial biscuits, will you?"

"Vita-jelly?" Blanning mumbled. "I can step down to the corner grocery and get a steak or a couple of

chops, if you like."

Stoll nodded.

"I forgot that I'm in the twentieth century," he said. "All right, Grandpa, fetch the flesh. I'll enjoy sampling an old-fashioned meal for a change. I've read a lot about twentieth century cooking."

Blanning got his hat and left the house. He had lived alone since his wife and son, driven away by his petty cruelty, had left him. Mostly he ate at a cheap lunchroom, but occasionally he cooked a scanty meal at home.

As he passed his neighbor's house, he saw John Anders' wife backing their car from the drive.

"Good evening, Mr. Blanning," she greeted him with friendly pleasantness. "I'm just going to the movies. John won't go. He never has time to do anything, since he received his promotion. Sometimes I wish he hadn't been chosen for that promotion. At least, then he'd be able to take me to the movies occasionally."

She laughed, waved and drove on.

Blanning stared after her with slitted eyes. Her innocent reminder of Anders' triumph over him had brought all of the acid bitterness in his breast welling to the surface. His pale eyes turned to Anders' window. Anders was sitting at his desk, poring over a batch of papers. Blanning clenched his hands in futile rage.

"I'll kill him some day!" he grated harshly.

Suddenly his eyes narrowed, became hard points of blue-white ice. That incredible visitor from the future! Blanning's physical image. And the machine that brought him here. It would carry him back!

"Or me!" Blanning whispered in fascination at the staggering thought.

Trembling with eagerness, he hurried on to the store, bought a pound of steak and carried it back to his house. Stoll was lounging on the couch, laughing at the illustration of an automobile in a magazine.

"This twentieth century is wonderful, Grandpa," he chuckled. "I'm going to stay here the rest of my life. Gasoline vehicles! Can you beat it!"

Blanning smiled sourly. He no-

ticed that Stoll had removed his time-machine belt and laid it upon a table. Blanning dropped his eyes to hide the gleam in them. He went to the kitchen and broiled the steak. Then he called Stoll.

"All right," he said, "you can sit down and eat. I had dinner before you came from the—future."

BLANNING left his descendant wolfing the food and returned to the living room. Rapidly he inspected the time machine. It was not so very complicated to operate, he saw joyfully. A tiny dial, with a pointer to turn to the date desired. A button-switch to set the machine in operation. That was all.

"I can do it!" he whispered triumphantly. "It's the chance for a perfect crime. And I'll be safe in the twenty-first century—in the rôle of my cocky grandson!"

An hour later, Blanning crept from the house and crossed the lawn to John Anders' porch. Stoll had gone to bed in the spare room, with many sarcastic expressions of thanks at "Grandpa's" solicitude for his welfare.

Blanning knocked on the door. His gloved hand, in his coat pocket, gripped a tiny automatic pistol with eager impatience.

"Why, Blanning!" Anders exclaimed, opening the door. "This is a surprise. I haven't seen you over here since—"

"Since you inveigled yourself into the good graces of the general manager, and beat me out of my just promotion!" Blanning hissed, his eyes glittering like two white-hot diamonds.

Anders reddened with embarrassment.

"Now, Blanning," he murmured placatingly, "you know that isn't true. You had your chance, just like I did. Let's be friends. My wife was saying, only this morning, that she'd like for you to come over to dinner—"

Blanning snarled. Grinning like a gargoyle, he jerked the deadly little pistol from his pocket.

Anders paled, started back.

"Blanning!" he gasped, incredulous.

lous. "You're mad! *Don't, man—*"

Blanning fired. The little gun made a barely audible spat as it sent its steel-jacketed missile through Anders' heart.

For a long moment Blanning feasted his gloating eyes on the dying man's racked face. Then he laid the pistol on the floor and tossed his hat, with his name on the sweat-band, by the body.

"Everyone at the office knows I had that pistol," he muttered, "and my hat will cinch it. Yes—I, in the person of my revered descendant, will go to the chair for the murder of John Anders!"

Blanning closed the door behind him and hurried back to his own house. In his bedroom, he undressed and carried his clothes to the spare room. He heard Curt Stoll snoring lustily on the bed.

Blanning had given Stoll a suit of his pajamas. Stoll's queer, metallic clothing was lying on a chair. Blanning quietly gathered it up and substituted his own. Then he took the time-belt from the dresser and crept back to his room. In a few moments he was dressed in Stoll's clothes. He strapped the time-machine belt around his waist and stepped before a mirror.

He started, as he saw the exact likeness of the man from the future staring from the glass. With a smile of triumph, Blanning went to the living room and peered across at the Anders' house. Mrs. Anders was just turning the car into the drive.

Blanning's eyes glistened with evil anticipation as the woman disappeared into the house. He gripped the window ledge as a piercing scream stabbed from the death room. He waited a moment more, extracting the last ounce of relish from the tragic scene that he could visualize in the little house across the lawn.

Then he hurried to the exact spot where Curt Stoll had appeared from the future. He turned the time-selector pointer to approximately the same time that Stoll had departed from the twenty-first century, and pressed the switch.

Slowly the ghostly, bluish light en-

veloped him. Blanning's head swam dizzily, and he had the sensation that he was falling . . . falling . . .

CURT STOLL woke with a jerk, as a piercing scream stabbed through the window. He sat up in bed and looked bewilderedly about the unfamiliar room. Then he remembered. "Grandpa lives in quite a lively neighborhood," he grinned, getting up and going to the window.

He leaned against the frame and listened curiously to the rending sobs of a woman, next door. Suddenly he started, as a shrieking siren whined down the street.

"That meant a police atomic-car, in my time," he muttered. "Wonder what's up, next door."

He peered out of the window, toward the street. A police prowl car was skidding to a stop in front of the neighboring cottage. Stoll's eyes narrowed as uniformed men spilled from the car and rushed into the house.

"Better tell Grandpa about this," he muttered thoughtfully.

He went to Blanning's room and opened the door. He pinched his sharp chin puzzledly, at sight of the empty bed. Blanning had said that he was going to retire shortly after his guest.

Slowly over Stoll's brooding, sour features there spread an expression of dawning suspicion. He rushed to his bedroom, darted to the dresser where he had put his time-belt.

He snarled as he saw that it was gone. He cursed savagely as he observed his clothes were missing too.

"So Grandpa's taken my time machine and clothes, and gone into the future," he mused. "I wonder—"

Curt Stoll broke off, as a thunderous pounding shook the front door. He hesitated, then walked to the living room and opened the door. Two blue-clad policemen and a sobbing woman stood there, eying him accusingly.

"That's him!" the woman shrieked, pointing a trembling finger. "That's the man whose hat and pistol were beside my husband's body!"

Stoll paled as the officers pushed him back into the room.

"What's wrong—" he began nervously.

"Blanning!" snapped one of the policemen. "We want you to come with us. You murdered John Anders!"

"You're crazy!" Stoll exclaimed, stupefied.

"You heard him!" the other officer growled. "The dumbest trick I ever saw a killer pull off. Not only did you leave your gun by the body, but you left your hat with your *name* in it!"

The policeman shook his head wonderingly at such stupidity.

Suddenly Stoll saw it all. "Grandpa" had, for some reason—a grudge, no doubt—killed his neighbor. Then he had taken the time-belt and gone a hundred years into the future, where his crime would be an ancient, forgotten thing. And he had left Stoll to pay the penalty for the murder.

Stoll's features writhed with fear and anger. "I didn't do it!" he bleated. "I didn't do it!"

"Yeah?" one of the cops drawled skeptically. "Well, you'd better hope that the judge and jury believe that, because I don't!"

Stoll looked wildly at the stern faces of the policemen, the grief-stricken face of the murdered man's wife. He remembered reading of the horrible death in the electric chair that was the sentence meted out to murderers in the twentieth century.

In the century Curt Stoll had left, execution was easy—a drowsy, peaceful drifting away into eternal sleep, in the anesthesia room that looked like a hospital operating theater, with its chrome table and white-gowned medical executioners.

"You can't!" Stoll shouted, as the officers seized him and pulled him from the room toward the death that he knew was certain. "I didn't kill him! I didn't kill . . ."

GRADUALLY the falling sensation left Blanning and he opened his eyes. Eyes that dilated in terrified amazement, as they darted about a strange, plastic-paneled room and came to rest on the body of a Junoesque, platinum-haired woman who sprawled on the deep carpet, a

long, slender knife protruding from the center of her swelling breast.

The rich red blood still spread languidly over her pale-blue, metallic blouse. A short skirt of the same material covered her pale limbs.

Stunned, Blanning faltered back. Suddenly the white-metal door flew open and a screaming woman, followed by a uniformed man, burst into the room. The woman pointed a shaking finger at the stupefied Blanning.

"He stabbed poor Mrs. Stoll, not five minutes ago, just as I came in the room with her medicine! I've heard him threaten the poor woman a dozen times, and now he's done it!"

"No!" Blanning snarled desperately. "It wasn't me—"

"Don't lie, you brute!" the woman screeched fiercely. "I saw you myself—and then, you worked some devil's magic and disappeared before my very eyes!"

Blanning knew, then. Curt Stoll had murdered his wife, pressed the switch of his time-belt, and gone backward through time to the twentieth century, where his crime would be a hundred years in the future! And Blanning was, to all intent and purpose, Curt Stoll!

Desperately Blanning shot his hand to the metal case, tried to turn the pointer backward. The red-uniformed policeman, who wore a badge upon which was stamped the insignia United American Police, sprang forward and ripped the time-belt from his waist.

Like a cornered rat, Blanning fought for his life. He snatched at the precious belt, jerked it from the officer's hand. But the black case, propelled by Blanning's yank, thudded into the wall and shattered into a hopeless confusion of batteries, tubes and tangled wiring.

"All right, my man," the policeman said grimly, drawing a long atomic pistol with a flaring muzzle from its holster. "Come along quietly. Mrs. Stoll's maid saw you do it. It's the anesthesia room for you, I can promise you that!"

"No!" Blanning shrieked, as the officer dragged him from the room. "I didn't kill her! I didn't kill . . ."



The sound of a pistol shot and the shattering of glass filled the radio dome

THE MOLECULE MONSTERS

By OSCAR J. FRIEND

When Lattimer Underwrote the Cyclotronic Research, He Had No Idea Dr. Singer's Brain Children Would Come Home to Roost!

FAINTLY surprised that neither Dr. Singer nor Diana appeared to meet him, William Lattimer let himself in and stared thoughtfully around the circular room that was the main laboratory.

Things hadn't changed much since his last visit, except for installation of a mass of electrical-looking machinery near one end of a chemist's work-table—the equipment, doubtless, for

which the last Lattimer check had gone.

Lattimer pinched his nether lip a bit ruefully as he wondered whether the research scientist and his daughter could be upstairs in the radio dome or down in the cyclotron basement. He knew better than to start searching for them; he might interrupt an important experiment in this study of the structure of matter.

He always felt outclassed and uncomfortable in the presence of Dr. Singer or his daughter. They were scientific people, wrapped up in the study of energy and matter, so—so smart, while William Lattimer was simply a wealthy young man with a limitless check book and the cheerful willingness to finance the Singer research. That father or daughter could possibly consider him with more than appreciative condescension he had no idea.

Of course the physicist always greeted him heartily with the salutation, "William, my boy!" And Diana always had a nice smile for him. They never failed to take time off during each of his visits to show him around and explain new apparatus, telling him of the progress made—in words of no more than three syllables, carefully avoiding scientific terms.

But all that Lattimer could grasp was that Dr. Singer was trying to break matter down into sheer energy, or congeal energy and force into solid matter. Or both. It was all very confusing. If only there were some way he could demonstrate to them that he was more than just an animated money-bags, Lattimer thought.

Shedding his hat and overcoat he wandered over toward the new machinery, eyeing the mass of coils and castings and tubes and grids with utter lack of comprehension. There was one flat disk on a three-foot dais that looked to be the top of an electric range. Lattimer's layman's eye picked out a series of switches and controls, which led him to the conclusion that this was a sort of electric furnace with a hot-plate attachment.

He went on to the more familiar work-table. Among the orderly rows of bottles and flasks, his eye picked out a gallon bottle of pale-gray transparent liquid. He read the label with recognition. *Sodium silicate*.

LATTIMER knew what this was—liquid glass. And suddenly he recalled a simple little trick in chemical reaction that he had learned years ago in school. He sought for and found a bottle containing ferrous sulphate. Taking a clean beaker from

the rack, he poured several ounces of the liquid sodium silicate into it. Then selecting a couple of small lumps of the green vitriol, he dropped them into the beaker.

He stood back with a small glow of pride to watch the slow formation of a green, translucent bubble atop each lump. According to formula, these bubbles would elongate upward like sections of stems, continuing to bud out from the green vitriol until they reached the surface of the liquid, to produce a sort of chemical tree.

Blue vitriol, Lattimer knew, would grow transparent blue growths. Different colors could be achieved from variously colored chemicals.

Simple, but odd and interesting. At least it proved that he knew something besides the ability to handle money, Lattimer told himself.

In the stillness he could hear a faint whine of power somewhere in the bowels of the building. Without doubt Dr. Singer was at work with the cyclotron. There was time to grow a whole marine garden to exhibit to Diana.

But somehow the chemical reaction was sluggish. Lattimer wondered if he should have cut the solution of sodium silicate with a little water. Since that hadn't been done, heat was the next best thing.

Lattimer frowned at the pair of greenish bubbles on the two lumps of green vitriol which refused to shoot upward like stem segments. Impatiently he set the beaker on the hot-plate and snapped the first switch to generate a mild heat.

The resistance coils glowed red, and a hum developed somewhere in the heart of the assembled machinery. Slowly the glow faded out. Annoyed, Lattimer contemplated the wiring arrangement and then reached forth and closed a massive knife-blade switch.

Instantly an aura of violet light sprang into being like a sort of shower curtain, enclosing the three-foot disk and the little beaker of chemical with a cylinder of purple light. Alarmed, Lattimer moved to open the switch.

Before his hand could close on the handle, there was a clap of sound like a bolt of thunder, a flash of blinding

light—and William Lattimer felt himself being hurled backward by a rush of expanding gas. His head struck the floor, and he lost consciousness.

He did not know how long he had been out.

"Hrrrggl uggl?" inquired a guttural, croaking voice.

Lattimer's first thought was one of chagrin. By meddling with something about which he knew nothing, he had caused an explosion and had destroyed perhaps thousands of dollars' worth of equipment. He groaned unhappily and opened his eyes.

Immediately he knew he was crazy, and he forgot his throbbing head. Squatting beside him and bending over him solicitously was the most awful-looking monstrosity he had ever seen—a scrawny, amphibian creature of vivid green skin, hairless and naked save for a pair of short trunks of fine mail or sequined cloth. The thing had four taloned claws for each foot and hand.

But the crowning horror was the head. Bald and round, with bat ears, huge eyes and a mouth of enormous size, filled with a double row of glistening white teeth which included four tusks. The closest thing Lattimer could think of for comparison was a gargoyle.

"Hrrrggl uggl?" repeated the monstrosity.

"Grrggl gump!" croaked a second voice in a slightly higher register.

YOUNG Lattimer became aware of a current of air. He twisted his head to find a green-skinned duplicate of the first nightmare squatted on his opposite side, fanning him with the rubber mat from the laboratory sink's drainboard. The only difference was that this second caricature of a giant frog wore a brief kilt or skirt, instead of trunks of the metallic-scaled material.

The utter absurdity of the situation precluded any fear on Lattimer's part. He struggled to sit up, and the pair of green creatures drew back a bit to watch him anxiously.

He was still in the laboratory. Nothing had changed, except that his mind had conjured up this pair of

animated gargoyles. Lattimer glanced swiftly at the electric machine he had mistaken for an oven.

It was apparently all right, still and silent, the troublesome knife switch open again. But on the disk lay the broken, shattered remains of his sodium silicate experiment. The beaker was in a thousand pieces and its liquid contents had spread out in a pool, dripping off one edge of the disk to the floor. Of the two lumps of green vitriol there was no sign.

"Hrrrggl uggl?" croaked both grotesque creatures together.

"What the devil does that mean?" demanded Lattimer in exasperation. "Can't you two overgrown frogs speak English?"

"Certainly," came the surprising answer from the first creature. "We have to know what medium of sounds you use before we can communicate with you. What's a frog?"

"You are. Where did you come from?"

Both of them pointed in unison toward the still dripping disk.

"Elucelom!" they chorused.

Lattimer stared in horrified bewilderment. The gargoyle in trunks elucidated further.

"Nortisop," he said, placing one taloned hand on his green breast and bowing slightly. "Nortagen," he added, pointing to his companion.

"Good lord!" groaned Lattimer, shuddering. "I've created you two goggle-eyed monstrosities out of a couple of lumps of copperas!"

Neither was in the least insulted.

"What's your name?" asked Nortagen conversationally.

"William Lattimer," he answered before he thought how silly this all was. "But I guess you'll be calling me 'papa' if I don't do something about this. My heavens! I've got to find Dr. Singer."

"Papa? That's nice," croaked Nortagen, obviously the female member of this pair of five-foot freaks.

Lattimer quivered at the term of address. "Who is Dr. Singer?" Nortagen added.

Lattimer took up a notch on his courage.

"First, let's get our relationship

and names settled," he declared. "I can't remember those weird names you've given yourselves. I'm going to call your companion Joe and you Martha—for a couple of big-mouthed movie comics," he added sotto voce.

"Just as you like, Papa," agreed Martha obediently. "You brought us to this dimension in different fashion than the one in which Suelcun came."

"Suelcun?" cried Lattimer, looking around wildly. "Are there any more of you—you frog-faced freaks?"

Nortisop—or Joe—was rambling around the laboratory, examining things with the lively curiosity of a monkey. He had found a book on animal life and was riffling rapidly through the pages. He stopped suddenly and came trotting over to Martha, pointing at a color cut of a pop-eyed bullfrog.

"Look!" he wailed. "Papa calls us that!"

He dropped the volume on the floor, snatched up a sliver of glass from the broken beaker and before Lattimer's horrified eyes slit his throat from ear to ear. He toppled to the floor, a thick, greenish ichor welling from the wound.

"Good God!" gasped Lattimer in horror. "He's killed himself!"

"Yes," agreed Martha calmly, still studying the color picture.

"Nortisop—Joe—is a very sensitive soul. He can't stand harsh sobriquets, and you must admit your choice of nicknames is not very flattering. Whenever Joe is insulted he always commits suicide."

"But what'll we do?" cried Lattimer anxiously, casting around hopelessly for some sort of first-aid material.

"Nothing," said Martha. "Joe can't die. That wound will heal in a minute and he'll be all right. It's just a little messy and trying, at times. You'll be careful about your speech from now on, Papa, I know."

EVEN as she spoke, Lattimer saw the gash across Joe's throat close up magically from the bottom outward. Joe sat up and grinned a toothy smile at him. His trembling and agitation subsided, Lattimer

confronted his two creations sternly.

"This is ridiculous!" he said. "I'm not going through the rest of my life being accompanied and hounded by you two—two things. But I am responsible for you, so I've got to do something about it. I'm going to find Dr. Singer and get his advice."

"You two—children"—he choked on the word—"stay right here in this laboratory while I'm gone. Don't leave it, and don't touch a thing! Say, how did that switch on the machine get pulled open? Did I do that, I wonder?"

"I did it after Norta—Martha and I stepped off the dais," Joe volunteered. "No sense in wasting power."

"Joe's mechanical-minded," explained Martha. "That's why he was chief technician in the laboratory of Suelcun in Elucelom."

"Eh? Oh, sure," said Lattimer, shaking his head dazedly as he started for the door leading toward the basement. "Well, don't bother anything before I come back."

"Of course not," Joe agreed amiably.

Promptly he headed for the desk of Dr. Singer, where he began opening drawers.

Lattimer fairly ran after he left the laboratory. Before he reached the bottom of the basement stairs, he was breathless and calling out the scientist's name brokenly.

There was no answer to his shouts, and he despaired of finding anybody down here in the building's lower regions. What in the world had happened to Singer and Diana? For the first time Lattimer felt a thrill of danger. Was something amiss here—something aside from his own perplexing problem?

"Dr. Singer?" he cried out. "In the name of heaven, Doctor, where are you?"

At the very door of the lead-lined chamber housing what Lattimer hazily understood to be cyclotronic equipment—never tampered with or molested—he bumped into the man he sought. The white-haired, kindly old scientist was just emerging from the cyclotron chamber.

"Dr. Singer!" cried Lattimer in

vast relief. "Come to the main laboratory with me at once. I've just—just created a pair of—of molecule monsters, and—"

He broke off uncertainly as he gazed into the scientist's face. Dr. Singer was staring blankly at him with no sign of recognition. The old man's movements were slow and deliberate—as though he were moving underwater, or functioning in one of those slow-motion nightmares. But his eyes were glitteringly alive. Almost malevolent.

"What—are—you—saying?" he asked hoarsely, articulating with apparent difficulty.

"What's the matter with you, Dr. Singer? Are you sick? Where's Diana? Don't you know me? I'm William Lattimer!"

"Ah, yes—Lattimer," repeated the venerable scientist in obvious cogitation. "How did you get in here?"

"I have a key," Lattimer cried. "I'm financing your work—if you've forgotten."

"Of course," agreed Dr. Singer, nodding. "You were saying?"

"I've made an awful blunder in the chemical laboratory. I'm terribly sorry. Come and see Joe and Martha and tell me what steps must be taken to undo the damage."

"I can't have a couple of gargoyles following me around the rest of my life, calling me 'Papa.' I—but come and see for yourself that I'm not crazy!"

THE doctor seemed quite anxious to leave the basement. So, without further explanation, Lattimer turned and led the way upstairs. It would be easier to explain Joe and Martha as the scientist looked at them.

At the door to the laboratory Lattimer glanced back over his shoulder. To his astonishment, Dr. Singer was not following him. Instead, the white-haired old scientist was continuing on up the circular stairs to the radio dome on the top floor.

"Not up there, Dr. Singer!" cried Lattimer. "Here in the main lab."

The physicist hesitated momentarily on the stairs. His eyes glittered

impatiently as he glanced down.

"Later," he croaked out. "Now I must go to the astral tower."

"Astral tower?" repeated Lattimer in perplexity, wondering if the old man had gone a bit off the beam.

In addition, the muffled sound of hammering he now heard inside the laboratory contributed nothing to his own composure.

"Er—the radio dome," corrected Dr. Singer hoarsely. "I will attend to your case later."

He turned and continued on his way up the stairs in that queer undulating walk of his.

Torn between two courses, Lattimer hesitated. The tinkling sound of breaking glass within the laboratory decided him. Groaning, he opened the door and rushed in.

The sight that met his eyes made him cry out in angry alarm. Joe and Martha had been a very busy pair of bees during his absence. They had partially dismantled the electric apparatus, shifted certain things around, and were reassembling units and connections.

Joe, evidently, had invaded the culinary department, for he had a heavy butcher knife which he was wielding as a screw-driver and combination tool. The tinkling sound of glass had arisen in scraping the residue of the broken beaker from the dais to the concrete floor. A big black cigar was in Joe's mouth; he was chewing vigorously on it.

As Lattimer entered the laboratory, Joe laid down the knife and scurried over toward the desk.

This piece of furniture was in a mess. Joe had all but turned it upside down. Papers were scattered everywhere. One batch of notes was weighted down with Dr. Singer's automatic pistol, which the strange animal had found in the top drawer.

"Here!" yelled Lattimer. "Stop it! What the devil are you doing?"

Joe halted in the act of picking up the batch of notes. Martha went stoically ahead in her work of tightening connections and terminals.

"We've got to reverse the magnetic field," explained Joe.

"Reverse what field?" roared Latti-

mer, at once apprehensive and highly annoyed. "Didn't I tell you frog-faced apes not to touch a single thing while I was gone?"

"Aie-e-ee!" wailed Joe in anguish.

With one swift motion he swept up the pistol from the desk top, placed the muzzle against his temple and blew out his brains with three rapid shots. He slumped and sprawled lifelessly before the desk, his grotesque face twisted in a lugubrious grimace as green brains and green blood oozed out of his skull.

"There! You've done it again, Papa!" accused Martha. "Now we can't finish hooking this matter-receiver up as a sending set until Joe gets over his sulk."

"I'm sorry," Lattimer snapped, contrite and angry at the same time. "But haven't we done enough damage without you two making things worse? Just look at the mess you and Joe have got this place in!"

"You mean the desk?" asked Martha, still hurt and displeased over Joe's latest demise. "We had to consult the inventor's notes to make sure we didn't make any mistakes in reversing the field. Suelcun had no notes on this particular machine. I don't think he knew about it."

LATTIMER hurried over to the desk and quickly removed the automatic pistol from Joe's lax hand. He glanced at the injured head critically as he stuffed the gun into his side coat pocket. Already the wound had stopped bleeding and was filling out from within, like a wrinkled toy balloon being blown up.

"What are you talking about?" he demanded in exasperation as he bent over the littered desk.

"You act awfully dumb, Papa," said Martha candidly. "We must reverse the field before we can go back. That's elementary."

"Go back?"

"Certainly. You don't think we are like Suelcun, do you? The very way Joe reacts to unkind words should be enough to show you. I don't mind what you say, myself, but I shall be angry with you if you don't watch your speech."

Joe groaned bitterly and opened one eye. As soon as he caught Lattimer's glance, he promptly closed the eye and stiffened out again.

"I'm sorry, Joe," Lattimer said gruffly. "I forgot. But I'm badly worried about Dr. Singer and Diana, and —"

He broke off as he saw that certain of the copious notes in Dr. Singer's handwriting seemed to be day-to-day transcripts of something which had occurred during the past few days. He read:

Oct. 5. For the third time I seemed to make contact with a highly intelligent person on that ultra-ray band in the magnetic field. I can't understand it, as I am sure nobody else on Earth is experimenting in the same radio field.

Oct. 6. At last I am sure of it. I have established communication with a being on another world. Suelcun is his name. I suspected a hoax at first because he can converse fluently in English, but certain facts bear out the amazing conclusion that I have contacted something extraterrestrial. I must tell Diana about this astounding development.

Oct. 7. Suelcun has advanced an amazing suggestion. This is altogether a by-path from my present line of research, but I must confess that it opens a remarkable field for investigation. I must write to William Lattimer and ask his opinion on this digression. Additional equipment will be costly. Diana doesn't like the idea. Suelcun is going to give me complete information and details tomorrow.

There was no entry for the next day, which was yesterday. Lattimer looked up and blinked. He frowned and shook his head. A queer feeling of impending trouble, of something intangibly but undeniably wrong swept through him. By contrast, Joe and Martha seemed perfectly normal, rational creatures.

What did these notes of Dr. Singer mean? Did they have any bearing on the scientist's queer actions today? Suddenly Lattimer's mind seized on the name of the person mentioned in Singer's memoranda — Suelcun! Wasn't that the same name Joe and Martha had mentioned?

"Get up, Joe!" ordered Lattimer curtly. "We're going upstairs to see Dr. Singer right now. There's a lot that I don't understand."

Joe popped open his eyes and

scrambled hastily to his feet, his tanned footpads making a queer scratching sound on the floor.

"I hope you haven't mixed up those notes," he said grumpily. "There's one last set of equations I must check. Martha and I must get back to Elucelom, Papa. We can't eat your food." He indicated the half-chewed cigar he had dropped. "It won't take but a minute."

Snatching up the pad of notes from the desk, quite as though nothing had occurred to interrupt him, Joe rushed back to the waiting Martha's side. Taking the knife in hand and issuing a series of croaking orders to his mate in that harsh jargon which constituted his native speech, he set industriously to work, one eye on the notations.

It was a full moment before Lattimer could marshal his wits.

"Here!" he roared. "Leave that stuff alone, I told you. Come on, we're going up to see Dr. Singer."

JOE finished stripping the insulation from a last pair of wires and straightened up to grin at Lattimer, while Martha deftly finished making the connection.

"Don't excite yourself, Papa," he said, thrusting the knife carelessly down one leg inside his metallic shorts. "We had no intention of leaving you before straightening out that little difficulty with Suelcun."

"Huh? But I thought you didn't know what happened to this Suelcun party!" said Lattimer helplessly.

"That," Joe pointed out, "was before I read Dr. Singer's notes. It's quite simple, now. Through, Martha? Come, let us go help papa."

Obediently Martha stood erect and trotted toward the door. Rubbing the back of his head vigorously, William Lattimer led the way out and up the circular stairs. At the door to the radio dome he halted, waiting for his two bizarre companions to gain his side. Then he flung open the door and ushered them in.

The upper room of the laboratory had been finished, as its name indicated, in the manner of an astronomical observatory. It was here that Dr.

Singer had installed all his apparatus pertaining to ray and radio emanations. That was how the place came to be called the radio dome. Lattimer himself only vaguely understood the setup.

The figure of Dr. Singer was at the far side of the room, fussing around a giant-size radio tube mounted in a massive base of curved metal legs, which reminded Lattimer somehow of an arching octopus. He had never seen the huge tube before, and he couldn't get a clear view of it now because of Singer's intervening bulk.

At the sound of their entrance, the white-haired scientist swung around to confront his three visitors. Lattimer opened his mouth to speak, to explain his two fantastic companions. He didn't utter a word.

It was as though an invisible spark flashed out there across the circular chamber—between Dr. Singer and Lattimer's grotesque creations. A chill air of surprise, of expectancy, of actual danger seemed to fill the room. Joe and Martha stood like frozen gargoyles, staring at the figure of the Earthman scientist in an attitude of growing conviction.

It was Dr. Singer who broke the silence.

"Hrrrgl uggl!" he croaked out. "Nortisop! Nortagen!"

Joe and Martha exchanged glances and nodded once before turning back to the astonished physicist.

"Suelcun!" they exclaimed.

The queer glitter which had been in Dr. Singer's eyes flared higher in a venomous flame. He began croaking away rapidly in that outlandish gibberish which Lattimer took to be the native speech of Elucelom, wherever that was.

But the utter horror of the realization that swept over the young man all but congealed his blood. He remembered a number of things that had been puzzling him—that glitter in Singer's usually benevolent eyes, the scientist's queer movements—as though he tried to navigate in a strange medium. Or controlled the movements of a strange body! And the way the old man had failed to recognize his sponsor.

This wasn't Dr. George Singer. This was the unknown entity called Suelcun, inhabiting the Earth scientist's body!

The voice of Dr. Singer ceased its croaking. Joe took up the challenge. "Why not speak in English, Suelcun, so papa can understand us? After your body fell senseless beside the thought-projector in the astral tower, Nortagen and I worked feverishly to learn what was wrong. It was many parlongs later that, as we were bent over the projector, papa brought us through into this dimension physically.

"We didn't know until we read Dr. Singer's notes what your revolting plans were, or that you had sacrificed your Eluceloman body deliberately to come mentally to this three-dimensional world. We came here by accident; you came here on purpose—with evil design. What have you done with Dr. Singer?"

SUELUNCUN laughed. It was a frog's harsh croak.

"What difference does it make, fools?" he sneered. "I am here in Earthman form—safe from human reprisals and safe from Elucelom pursuit, or I will be as soon as I destroy that laboratory equipment which brought my two former technical assistants to this sphere. I didn't know about a matter integrator, but that makes little difference now.

"With what I do know, I shall control the gateway between the two dimensions. I have already set up a perfect catalyst by which to effect the exchange of personalities between Earthlings and Elucelomans from here. Thus, for those Elucelomans whom I wish to bring to this world, I can readily find suitable bodies. I can make this switch easily by a combination of the Singer apparatus and my own."

"Oh!" exclaimed Martha sagely. "So that's how it is! A transposition of entities. Then Dr. Singer is now in—"

"Elucelom," croaked Suelcun. "And that's where he shall stay. As for you, my servitors, you will obey my orders here—or I will destroy you!"

"How?" asked Joe insolently. "We are no longer under Eluceloman law and do not have to obey you. And you will find the destruction of Eluceloman matter quite difficult on this plane."

"We will see," promised Suelcun grimly.

He turned heavily to one side and flipped a relay of switches. The giant tube lighted up with a roseate glow. Listening and watching intently, William Lattimer now saw the crowning horror of this incredible nightmare. Within the tube, standing rigid in a sort of hypnosis or cataleptic trance, her sweet face perfectly blank, was Diana Singer!

The girl was clad in the flimsiest of garments. She looked oddly like a cigarette girl in a night club, but that incongruity only made the weirdness of her setting all the more bizarre. The sight of her within that gigantic tube, helpless and sealed away like a living filament to play the part of a catalyst in Suelcun's terrible plan, was more than young Lattimer could stand.

Without realizing what he did or why he did it, he suddenly understood the true nature of his interest in Dr. Singer's research all along. He was in love with Diana Singer, and now just as he was discovering it he was about to lose her forever.

Lattimer gave vent to a roar of rage. He leaped forward to assault the glowing tube, which was slowly lighting up every part of the girl's supple form.

"Seize him!" commanded Suelcun sternly. "He shall be the first subject for our experiment. I'll get in touch with Mota Dab, who wants to come through."

It was Martha who intercepted Lattimer's mad charge. She moved swiftly in front of the berserk young man and grabbed him. The figure of Dr. Singer seated itself before a complicated instrument panel and placed a set of headphones over its ears.

"Take it easy, Papa," said Martha calmly but firmly. "Watch Joe."

Almost against his will Lattimer halted and turned his head in the designated direction. Joe had moved to

a position behind the false Suelcun to watch as the other set up on the panel a complicated formula in switches and buttons. Then, just as Suelcun glanced up to speak again, Joe gave him an expert rabbit punch across the nape of the neck. The body of Dr. Singer fell senseless to the floor.

IMMEDIATELY Joe reached for the instrument panel. He made a couple of swift changes in the formula setup. Then he turned to Martha and Lattimer with a wide grin, his grotesque body shaking with mirth.

"The simplest possible solution," he informed them. "Since the doctor's daughter is already in use as the detector filament in Suelcun's thought-projector, it is quite fitting that her father be the first person to test the instrument. Along with Suelcun!"

"Wh—what do you mean?" asked Lattimer uncertainly.

"I just changed Suelcun's formula setup sufficiently to contact the astral tower where Dr. Singer's mind is imprisoned in Suelcun's body. When Suelcun awakes, he will find himself back in Elucelom, and Dr. Singer will be here. Then we can break the circuit of power which is connected with the cyclotronic machine down in the basement, shatter the tube and resuscitate the young woman."

"Diana isn't—isn't harmed in any way?" Lattimer said falteringly.

"Not at all," Joe assured him. "She doesn't even know what is transpiring. Martha, I think our work is done here. We can return to Elucelom."

"You mean that—that you didn't evolve from a lump of copperas, after all?" inquired Lattimer. "You are not a molecule monster that I accidentally created?"

"Certainly not!" snorted Joe. "Your part in the amazing circumstance was quite haphazard, you know."

He examined the body of Dr. Singer, nodded, then pulled a heavy switch through a rheostatic arc of contacts. The glow of the huge tube faded and the whine and throb of power died away.

"You can shatter the tube now and remove the young woman," Joe said.

Lattimer contemplated the glass tube and then drew the automatic pistol from his pocket. He took careful aim at the tube. Then he thought of something.

"You mean to say that you knew all along what most of this has been about?" he demanded. "And you let me go on thinking that I had created you, that I was responsible for your existence? Why, you goggle-eyed bullfrog, I could take delight in—"

"Ae-i-e-e-e!" Joe's grin faded and he let out a mournful wail.

Quick as a flash, Martha leaped upon Lattimer's shoulders and clamped her taloned hand across his mouth.

"Didn't I warn you about calling Joe names?" she croaked angrily.

But Martha was too late. With one savage motion Joe whipped out the knife he had thrust in his belt and plunged it full into his breast. Still whistling faintly like a collapsed balloon, he flopped on his back, all sprawled out ludicrously at Lattimer's feet.

The next instant, the sound of the pistol shot and the shattering of glass filled the radio dome. Handicapped though he was by the weight of the angry and chattering Martha, Lattimer sprang toward the tube and caught the form of Diana Singer as the girl toppled slowly forward.

She came out of her queer hypnosis to clutch at her rescuer in vast relief.

"Oh, Bill!" she whispered. "I've had such a terrible dream. I—"

And at this moment she caught sight of Martha. Diana uttered a forlorn scream and fainted dead away in Lattimer's arms.

"Now," said Martha in her severest croak. "Now you know how I feel each time you drive Joe to suicide."

Lattimer glanced at her in mute appeal.

PRESENTLY Dr. Singer stirred and groaned. Lattimer had placed Diana gently in a chair. Accompanied by Martha, he approached the body of the scientist apprehensively. Singer opened his eyes, blinked, stared up at Lattimer in amazement and then smiled.

"William, my boy!" he exclaimed. "How good to see you! I've had a most amazing experience. I must tell you about—"

His eyes fell on Joe's collapsed body and his voice pinched off. Then he saw Martha, and he glared around wildly.

"All of us have had somewhat of an experience, sir," Lattimer agreed solemnly. "Let me tell you quickly what happened, and then we must hurry down to the laboratory before Diana revives. We've got to send Joe and Martha back to Elucelom."

Whereupon Joe sat up abruptly and pulled the knife from his breast without leaving a mark.

"Never mind about that," he protested. "Martha and I are not going back. We don't dare now, not after what's happened. Suecun is back there waiting for us."

"But, Joe, where will you go if you don't go back?" asked young Bill Lattimer anxiously.

"Wherever you go, Papa," Joe replied, yawning and handing Martha the knife. "I'm beginning to like it here."



HEADLINERS IN THE NEXT ISSUE

WITH a smashing and incredible adventure John Carstairs, the botanical detective, makes his appearance in the featured novel in our December number. Author Frank Belknap Long goes all out in this amazing case of **THE ETHER ROBOTS** where Carstairs and his sweetheart-secretary bitterly oppose the renegade scientist, Frome, to save the inner planets from a terrible doom.

* * * *

ON a vastly different order Ross Rocklyne has done a novelet of spatial combat which deals with the sabotage of the life-sustaining shipments of water to Mars. In **STORM IN SPACE** you will find a stirring epic of the void.

* * * *

NEXT on the cargo list is **TUBBY—TIME TRAVELER**, featuring the return of Tubby, that ingenious and intrepid scientific adventurer created by Ray Cummings. In this story Tubby invades a new field where he gets into one of his usual complete mix-ups.

* * * *

DOWN to Earth for a few minutes as we read an amazing article entitled **IS THE DEATH RAY HERE?** by J. E. Powell. But we soar back toward the stars almost immediately as the tremendous import of this factual account hits us. For a genuine death ray is here.

* * * *

EVERYBODY has had moments when they would like to live certain bits of their lives over, if only to correct a mistake. In **HOW MUCH TO THURSDAY**, Douglas Stapleton, a new author to our pages, sends his hero back into the past to solve a deep mystery of the present. You will enjoy every word of this one.

* * * *

ROUNDING up the rearguard, of course, Sergeant Saturn rides herd on the departments, keeps the kiwis more or less in line, and helps the editor put a swell issue to bed. There'll be another story or two, and a splendid cover painting which illustrates **THE ETHER ROBOTS**. So book your passage early for next voyage!

CONQUEST

By
JOSEPH GILBERT

*When One's Soul Is Clean,
the Vildest Schemes of
Wilful Men Turn to Ashes!*

THE President of America had stood alone in a barren field. Out of the sky a plane had come. Silent as a bitter dream it had settled. They had taken him then.

Now he stood in a barren field again. Not alone. With three men. Three men who had played God. And facing them, the President of the United States said: "Three men to conquer America. You do not look like conquerors, gentlemen."

The slim, polite T'vin Sokomo adjusted his spectacles on his mild, scholarly face and smiled.

"We are not the conquerors, Mr. President. We, like all good businessmen, let others do the detail work. That is logic."

"Yes," said the President. "Yes, that is logic. You could not conquer our country with all the armed force at your disposal, so you pick the smallest, humblest creature on God's mad earth to do it for you."

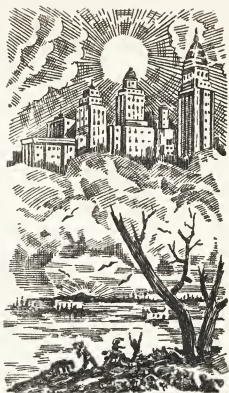
"We could not smash a germ with a bomb, could we? Nor crush it lifeless with a tank. Your logic, I believe, Dr. Leich? Permit me to congratulate you on its success, sir."

The stolid Teuton scientist nodded his close-cropped head in acknowledgment.

"You're very pale, Mr. President. Worry?"

"Eh? No, Doctor. No, I haven't worried. The word is far too inadequate. Say that I know now what torture is like."

"It wouldn't have been so bad if we had expected it, if we had been prepared," the President explained. "We were prepared. But not for a tiny microbe that left its victim outwardly sound and apparently un-



touched the first day—then turned his entire body a mottled green the second, and killed him the third.

"The Hanley-Holmes field stopped it, of course, just as it stopped your bombs and men. But it took power; so very much power, and it could only be used in certain restricted areas. It was impossible to protect those thousands of our soldiers who died, and the thousands who followed them, and then the hundreds of thousands."

"Then your machines made war, gentlemen, following the germ, mopping up. Your machines—we could stop the machines at first, but not as man after man turned green and died."

"You've almost won, gentlemen. You are in a position to demand the President of America as a hostage in return for a week's respite. Incidentally your promise is worthless, of course. I have no hope of returning alive."

Albert Streicher, military strategist, his midget five-foot one-inch figure incongruous in a specially designed uniform flushed.

"Let us be practical, please. Your country has not a chance. You per-

sonally are the center of operations. With you gone, the command of your armies will be slower, less efficient.

"We have only to wait and smash your countrymen with our guns. In time they will be crushed. Taking your sparse, protected areas will be comparatively simple. The Hanley-Holmes barrier, already stretched thin, will prove no obstacle. It cannot save your armies. It will not save your people."

The President eyed Streicher calmly and unafraid.

"We Americans," he said, "know too well the folly of concentrating all power in the hands of one man. My absence will complicate things, slow them down—but the executive machinery will not bog down.

"Your own position is different. You three men know the secret of the dread bacteria which you employ—and only you three. And now I will tell you a secret. Our American laboratories have discovered at last how to destroy this bacteria.

"If no more germs are released, our scientists can wipe it out. By the same token, if you men should die, the bacteria plague would end. So—you must die. Then it will be easy to eradicate this germ, and not at all difficult to conclude this war.

"You do something to your soldiers, don't you, gentlemen? They're fanatics. But you go beyond that, make them even better soldiers. For you render them incapable of initiative. Without your direction, they would simply stop fighting. And thus the war would end."

THE three men glowered.

"You are a fool to tell us this," T'yin Sokomo, the financier, said shortly. "We had you carefully examined by our men to see that you carried no weapons. There is nothing here but an empty field and the four chairs on which we sit. Our soldiers are ready to spring forth like a swarm of bees when we give the order. You could not damage us in any way. You are the fool!"

The President went on speaking.

"A financier to pay for a war, a soldier to furnish fighting men, a

scientist to win it. The stakes: a country. A beautiful, fertile land, rich with hope and eagerness and honest faith. Three lives for an entire population. It is not a bad bargain, gentlemen."

T'yin Sokomo's voice was suave.

"Our good President's mind wanders, perhaps? The strain—"

"I walked out," said the President calmly. "They refused to hear of such a plan, brave men that they are. So I walked out and had a soldier neutralize the Hanley-Holmes barrier. I walked across an unprotected desolate land that had once been green and bountiful. Then I returned, and they had to agree. There was nothing else to do. And thus I came here to you gentlemen."

A chair went backward. The diminutive Streicher was on his feet, bellowing. "What madness is this? Are you trying to tell us—"

The President took a handkerchief to cry. The tears rolled down his face, removing grease paint it had taken make-up experts hours to apply.

Albert Streicher sat down and began to cry. The tears rolled down his face and he blubbered like a child.

T'yin Sokomo sat down impassively and quietly blew out his brains.

Dr. Leich drew a small bottle out of his black suit and withdrew the cork.

"Clever, Mr. President. My congratulations. May your country be restored to its former prestige."

This time the President of America nodded acknowledgment while Dr. Joachim Leich swallowed from the bottle, remained standing for a moment, then collapsed and died.

In the west the sun retreated to its night time berth in a magnificent aura of gold and red. There would be twilight for America, too, thought the President. Then a night of struggle, as a ravished land was rebuilt.

At last the dawn would come. The sun would rise on a land of hope reborn, with freedom and security for all.

The President smiled his sad, wise smile as the setting sun etched with its dying rays a calm and courageous face. The face shone pale green in the waning light of day.



The trees came alive as a wave of natives dropped noiselessly from the over-hanging branches

THE HAZING

By ISAAC ASIMOV

Three Arcturian University Men Run Into Galactic Interference When They Produce the Wrong Play!

THE Campus of Arcturus University, on Arcturus's second planet, Eron, is a dull place during mid-year vacations and, moreover, a hot one, so that Myron Tubal, sophomore, found life boring and uncomfortable. For the fifth time that day, he looked in at the Undergraduate Lounge in a desperate attempt at locating an acquaintance, and was

at last gratified to behold Bill Sefan, a green-skinned youngster from Vega's fifth planet.

Sefan, like Tubal, had flunked Biosociology and was staying through vacation to study for a make-up exam. Things like that weave strong bonds between sophomore and sophomore.

Tubal grunted a greeting, dropped his huge hairless body—he was a na-

tive of the Arcturian System itself—into the largest chair and said:

"Have you seen the new freshmen yet?"

"Already! It's six weeks before the fall semester starts."

Tubal yawned. "These are a special breed of frosh. They're the very first batch from the Solarian System—ten of them."

"Solarian System? You mean that new system that joined the Galactic Federation three—four years ago?"

"That's the one. Their world capital is called Earth, I think."

"Well, what about them?"

"Nothing much. They're just here, that's all. Some of them have hair on the upper lip, and very silly it looks, too. Otherwise, they look like any of a dozen or so other breeds of Humanoids."

It was at this point that the door flew open and little Wri Forase ran in. He was from Deneb's single planet, and the short, gray fuzz that covered his head and face bristled with agitation, while his large purple eyes gleamed excitedly.

"Say," he twittered breathlessly, "have you seen the Earthmen?"

Sefan sighed. "Isn't anyone ever going to change the subject? Tubal was just telling me about them."

"He was?" Forase seemed disappointed. "But—did he tell you these were that abnormal race they made such a fuss over when the Solarian System entered the Federation?"

"They looked all right to me," said Tubal.

"I'm not talking about them from the physical standpoint," said the Denebian disgustedly. "It's the mental aspect of the case. Psychology! That's the stuff!" Forase was going to be a psychologist some day.

"Oh, that! Well, what's wrong with them?"

"Their mob psychology as a race is all wrong," babbled Forase. "Instead of becoming less emotional with numbers, as is the case with every other type of Humanoid known, they become *more* emotional! In groups, these Earthmen riot, panic, go crazy.

The more there are, the worse it is. So help me, we even invented a new mathematical notation to handle the problem. Look!"

He had his pocket-pad and stylus out in one rapid motion; but Tubal's hand clamped down upon them before the stylus so much as made a mark.

Tubal said, "Whoa! I've got a wal-loping lulu of an idea."

"Imagine!" murmured Sefan.

Tubal ignored him. He smiled again, and his hand rubbed thoughtfully over his bald dome.

"Listen," he said, with sudden briskness. His voice dropped to a conspiratorial whisper.

ALBERT WILLIAMS, late of Earth, stirred in his sleep and became conscious of a prodding finger exploring the space between his second and third ribs. He opened his eyes, swiveled his head, stared stupidly; then gasped, shot upright, and reached for the light switch.

"Don't move," said the shadowy figure beside his bed. There was a muted click, and the Earthman found himself centered in the pearly beam of a pocket flash.

He blinked and said, "Who the blasted devil are you?"

"You are going to get out of bed," replied the apparition stolidly. "Dress, and come with me."

Williams grinned savagely. "Try and make me."

There was no answer, but the flash beam shifted slightly and fell upon the shadow's other hand. It held a "neuronic whip," that pleasant little weapon that paralyzes the vocal cords and twists nerves into so many knots of agony. Williams swallowed hard, and got out of bed.

He dressed in silence, and then said:

"All right, what do I do now?"

The gleaming "whip" gestured, and the Earthman moved toward the door.

"Just walk ahead," said the unknown.

Williams moved out the room, along the silent corridor, and down eight stories without daring to look back. Out upon the campus he stopped, and

felt metal probe the small of his back.

"Do you know where Obel Hall is?"

Williams, nodding, began walking. He walked past Obel Hall, turned right at University Avenue, and after half a mile stepped off the roads and past the trees. A spaceship hulked dimly in the darkness, with ports closely curtained and only a dim light showing where the airlock opened a crack.

"Get in!" He was shoved up a flight of stairs and into a small room.

He blinked, looked about him and counted aloud.

"—seven, eight, nine, and I make ten. They've got us all, I guess."

"It's no guess," growled Eric Chamberlain sourly. "It's a certainty." He was rubbing his hand. "I've been here an hour."

"What's wrong with the mitt?" asked Williams.

"I sprained it on the jaw of the rat that brought me here. He's as tough as a spaceship's hull."

Williams seated himself cross-legged upon the floor and rested his head against the wall.

"Has anyone any idea as to what this is all about?"

"Kidnaping!" said little Joey Sweeney. His teeth were chattering.

"What the devil for?" snorted Chamberlain. "If any of us are millionaires, I hadn't heard of it. I know I'm not!"

Williams said, "Look, let's not go off the deep end. Kidnaping or anything of that sort is out. These people can't be criminals. It stands to reason that a civilization that has developed psychology to the extent this Galactic Federation has, would be able to wipe out crime without raising a sweat."

"Pirates," grunted Lawrence Marsh. "I don't think so, but it's just a suggestion."

"Nuts!" said Williams. "Piracy is a frontier phenomenon. This region of space has been civilized for tens of millennia."

"Just the same, they had guns," insisted Joe, "and I don't like it." He had left his glasses in his room and peered about in near-sighted anxiety.

"That doesn't mean much," answered Williams. "Now I've been thinking. Here we are—ten newly arrived freshmen at Arcturus U. On our first night here, we're bundled mysteriously out of our rooms and into a strange spaceship. That suggests something to me. How about it?"

SIDNEY MORTON raised his head from his arms long enough to say sleepily:

"I've thought of it, too. It looks like we're in for one hell of a hazing. Gents, I think the local sophs are just having good, clean fun."

"Exactly," agreed Williams. "Anyone have any other ideas?"

Silence. "All right, then, so there isn't anything to do but wait. Personally, I'm going to catch up on my sleep. They can wake me up if they need me."

There was a jar at that moment and he fell off balance.

"Well, we're off—wherever we're going."

Moments later, Bill Sefan hesitated just an instant before entering the control room. When he finally did, it was to face a highly excited Wri Forase.

"How is it working?" demanded the Denebian.

"Rotten," responded Sefan sourly. "If they're panicked, then I'm damned. They're going to sleep."

"Asleep! All of them! But what were they saying?"

"How do I know? They weren't speaking Galactic, and I can't make head or tail out of their infernal foreign gibberish."

Forase threw his hands into the air in disgust.

"All right, let me think—"

Tubal spoke finally. "Listen, Forase, I'm cutting a class in Bio-soc.—which I can't afford. You guaranteed the psychology of this stunt. If it turns out to be a flop, I'm not going to like it."

"Well, for the love of Deneb," grated Forase desperately, "you two are a fine pair of yellow-bellies! Did you expect them to start screaming

and kicking right off? Sizzling Arc-turus! Wait till we get to the Spican System, will you? When we maroon them overnight—"

He tittered suddenly. "This is going to be the fanciest trick since they tied those stink-bats to the chromatic organ on Concert Night."

Tubal cracked a grin, but Sefan leaned back in his chair and remarked thoughtfully.

"What if someone—say, President Wynn—hears about this?"

The Arcturian at the controls shrugged. "It's only a hazing. They'll go easy."

"Don't play dumb, M. T. This isn't kid stuff. Planet Four, Spica—the whole Spican System, in fact—is banned to Galactic ships, and you know that. It's got a sub-Humanoid race on it. They're supposed to develop entirely free of interference until they discover interstellar travel on their own. That's the law, and they're strict about it. Space! If they find out about this, we'll be in the soup for fair."

Tubal turned in his seat. "How in Arcturus do you expect Prexy Wynn—damn his thick hide!—to find out about us? Now, mind you, I'm not saying the story won't spread around the campus, because half the fun will be killed if we have to keep it to ourselves. But how will names come out? No one will squeal. You know that."

"Okay," said Sefan, and shrugged.

And then Tubal said, "Ready for hyper-space!"

He compressed keys and there was the queer internal wrench that marked the ship's departure from normal space.

THE ten Earthmen were rather the worse for wear, and looked it. Lawrence Marsh squinted at his watch again.

"Two-thirty," he said. "That's thirty-six hours now. I wish they'd get this over with."

"This isn't a hazing," moaned Sweeney. "It takes too long."

Williams grew red. "What do you all look half-dead about? They've

been feeding us regularly, haven't they? They haven't tied us up, have they? I should say it was pretty evident that they were taking good care of us."

"Or," came Sidney Morton's discontented drawl, "fattening us up for the slaughter."

He paused, and everyone stiffened. There was no mistaking the queer internal wrench they had felt.

"Get *that*!" said Eric Chamberlain in sudden frenzy. "We're back in normal space again, and that means we're only an hour or two from wherever we're going. We've got to do something!"

"Hear, hear," Williams snorted. "But what?"

"There are ten of us, aren't there?" shouted Chamberlain, puffing out his chest. "Well, I've only seen one of them so far. Next time he comes in, and we've got another meal due us pretty soon, we're going to mob him."

Sweeney looked sick. "What about the neuronc whip he always carries?"

"It won't kill us. He can't get us all before we pin him down anyway."

"Eric," said Williams bluntly, "you're a fool."

Chamberlain flushed and his stub-fingered fists closed slowly.

"I'm just in the mood for a little practice persuasion. Call me that again, will you?"

"Sit down!" Williams scarcely bothered to look up. "And don't work so hard justifying my epithet. All of us are nervous and keyed-up, but that doesn't mean we ought to go altogether crazy. Not yet, anyway. First of all, even discounting the whip, mobbing our jailer won't be particularly successful."

"We've only seen one, but that one is from the Arcturian System. He's better than seven feet tall, and comfortably past the three-hundred-pound mark. He'd mop us up—all ten of us—with his bare fists. I thought you had one run-in with him already, Eric."

There was a thickish silence.

Williams added, "And even if we could knock him out and finish as many others as there may be in the

ship, we still haven't the slightest idea where we are or how to get back or even how to run the ship." A pause. Then, "Well?"

"Nuts!" Chamberlain turned away, and glowered in silence.

The door kicked open and the giant Arcturian entered. With one hand, he emptied the bag he carried, and with the other kept his neuronc whip carefully leveled.

"Last meal," he grunted.

There was a general scramble for the rolling cans, still lukewarm from recent heating. Morton glared at his with disgust.

"Say," he spoke stumblingly in Galactic, "can't you give us a change? I'm tired of this rotten goulash of yours. This is the fourth can!"

"So what? It's your last meal," the Arcturian snapped, and left.

A horrified paralysis prevailed.

"What did he mean by that?" gulped someone huskily.

"They're going to kill us!" Sweeney was round-eyed, the thin edge of panic in his voice.

Williams' mouth was dry and he felt unreasoning anger grow against Sweeney's contagious fright. He paused—the kid was only seventeen—and said huskily.

"Stow it, will you? Let's eat."

It was two hours later that he felt the shuddering jar that meant the landing and end of the journey. In that time, no one had spoken, but Williams could feel the pall of fear choke tighter with the minutes.

SPICA had dipped crimsonly below the horizon and there was a chill wind blowing. The ten Earthmen, huddled together miserably upon the rock-strewn hilltop, watched their captors sullenly. It was the huge Arcturian, Myron Tubal, that did the talking, while the green-skinned Vegan, Bill Sefan, and the fuzzy little Denebian, Wri Forase, remained placidly in the background.

"You've got your fire," said the Arcturian gruffly, "and there's plenty of wood about to keep it going. That will keep the beasts away. We'll leave you a pair of whips before we

go, and those will do as protection, if any of the aborigines of the planet bother you. You will have to use your own wits as far as food, water and shelter are concerned."

He turned away. Chamberlain let loose with a sudden roar, and leaped after the departing Arcturian. He was sent reeling back with an effortless heave of the other's arm.

The lock closed after the three other-world men. Almost at once the ship lifted off the ground and shot upward. Williams finally broke the chilled silence.

"They've left the whips. I'll take one and you can have the other, Eric."

One by one, the Earthmen dropped into a sitting position, back to the fire, frightened, half panicky.

Williams forced a grin. "There's plenty of game about—the region is well-wooded. Come on, now, there are ten of us and they've got to come back sometime. Let's show them we Earthmen can take it. How about it, fellows?"

He was talking aimlessly now. Morton said listlessly.

"Why don't you shut up? You're not making this any easier."

Williams gave up. The pit of his own stomach was turning cold.

The twilight blackened into night, and the circle of light about the fire contracted into a little flickering area that ended in shadows. Marsh gasped suddenly, and his eyes went wide.

"There's some — something coming!"

The stir that followed froze itself into attitudes of breathless attention.

"You're crazy," began Williams huskily—and stopped dead at the unmistakable, slithering sound that reached his ears.

"Grab your whip!" he screamed to Chamberlain.

Joey Sweeney laughed suddenly—a strained, high-pitched laugh.

And then—there was a sudden shrieking in the air, and the shades charged down upon them.

Things were happening elsewhere, too.

Tubal's ship lazed outward from Spica's fourth planet, with Bill Sefan

at the controls. Tubal himself was in his own cramped quarters, polishing off a huge flagon of Denebian liquor in two gulps.

Wri Forase watched the operation sadly.

"It costs twenty credits a bottle," he said, "and I only have a few left."

"Well, don't let me hog it," said Tubal magnanimously, "Match me bottle for bottle. It's all right with me."

"One swig like that," grumbled the Denebian, "and I'd be out till the Fall exams."

Tubal paid scant attention. "This," he began, "is going to make campus history as the hazing stunt—"

And at this point, there was a sharp, singing pinging *ping-g-g-g*, scarcely muffled by intervening walls, and the lights went out.

Wri Forase felt himself pressed hard against the wall. He struggled for breath and stuttered out in gasps.

"B-by Space, we're at f-full acceleration! What's wr-wrong with the equalizer?"

"Damn the equalizer!" roared Tubal, heaving to his feet. "What's wrong with the ship?"

HE STUMBLED out the door, into the equally dark corridor, with Forase crawling after him. When they burst into the control room, they found Sefan surrounded by the dim emergency lights, his green skin shining with perspiration.

"Meteor," he croaked. "It played hob with our power distributors. It's all going into acceleration. The lights, heating units and radio are all out of commission, while the ventilators are just barely limping." He added, "And Section Four is punctured."

Tubal gazed about him wildly. "Idiot! Why didn't you keep your eye on the mass indicator?"

"I did, you overgrown lump of putty," howled Sefan, "but it never registered! It—never—registered! Isn't that just what you'd expect from a second-hand jalopy, rented for two hundred credits? It went through the screen as if it were empty ether."

"Shut up!" Tubal flung open the suit-compartments and groaned. "They're all Arcturian models. I should have checked up. Can you handle one of these, Sefan?"

"Maybe." The Vegan scratched a doubtful ear.

In five minutes, Tubal swung into the lock and Sefan, stumbling awkwardly, followed after. It was half an hour before they returned.

Tubal removed his head-piece. "Curtains!"

Wri Forase gasped. "You mean—we're through?"

The Arcturian shook his head. "We can fix it, but it will take time. The radio is ruined for good, so we can't get help."

"Get help!" Forase looked shocked. "That's all we need. How would we explain being inside the Spican system? We might as well commit suicide as send out radio calls. As long as we can get back without help, we're safe. Missing a few more classes won't hurt us too much."

Sefan's voice broke in dully. "But what about those panicky Earthmen back on Spica Four?"

Forase's mouth opened, but he didn't say a word. It closed again, and if ever a Humanoid looked sick, Forase was that Humanoid.

That was only the beginning.

It took a day and a half to unscramble the space jalopy's power lines. It took two more days to decelerate to safe turning point. It took four days to return to Spica IV. Total—eight days.

When the ship hovered once more over the place where they had marooned the Earthmen, it was mid-morning, and Tubal's face as he surveyed the area through the television was a study in length. Shortly he broke a silence that had long since become sticky.

"I guess we've made every boner we could possibly have made. We landed them right outside a native village. There's no sign of the Earthmen."

Sefan shook his head dolefully. "This is a bad business."

Tubal buried his head in his long

arms clear down to the elbows.

"That's the finish. If they didn't scare themselves to death, the natives got them. Violating prohibited solar systems is bad enough—but it's just plain murder now, I guess."

"What we've got to do," said Sefan, "is to get down there and find out if there are any still alive. We owe them that much. After that—"

He swallowed. Forase finished in a whisper.

"After that, it's expulsion from the U., psycho-revision—and manual labor for life."

"Forget it!" barked Tubal. "We'll face that when we have to."

Slowly, very slowly, the ship circled downward and came to rest on the rocky clearing where, eight days previously, ten Earthmen had been left stranded.

"How do we handle these natives?" Tubal turned to Forase with raised eyebrow ridges (there was no hair on them, of course). "Come on, son, give with some sub-Humanoid psychology. There are only three of us and I don't want any trouble."

FORASE shrugged and his fuzzy face wrinkled in perplexity.

"I've just been thinking about that, Tubal. I don't know any."

"What!" exploded Sefan and Tubal in twin shouts.

"No one does," added the Denebian hurriedly. "It's a fact. After all, we don't let sub-Humanoids into the Federation till they're fully civilized, and we quarantine them until then. Do you suppose we have much opportunity to study their psychology?"

The Arcturian seated himself heavily. "This gets better and better. *Think*, Fuzzy-face, will you? Suggest something!"

Forase scratched his head. "Well—uh—the best we can do is to treat them like normal Humanoids. If we approach slowly, palms spread out, make no sudden movements and keep calm, we ought to get along. Now, remember, I'm saying we *ought* to. I can't be certain about this."

"Let's go, and damnation with certainty," urged Sefan impatiently. "It

doesn't matter much, anyway. If I get knocked off here, I don't have to go back home." His face took on a hunted look. "When I think of what my family is going to say—"

They emerged from the ship and sniffed the atmosphere of Spica's fourth planet. The sun was at meridian, and loomed overhead like a large orange basketball. Off in the woods, a bird called once in a creaky caw. Utter silence descended.

"Hmph!" said Tubal, arms akimbo.

"It's enough to make you feel sleepy. No signs of life at all. Now, which way is the village?"

There was a three-way dispute about this, but it didn't last long. The Arcturian first, the other two tagging along, they strode down the slope and toward the straggling forest.

A hundred feet inside, the trees came alive, as a wave of natives dropped noiselessly from the overhanging branches. Wri Forase went under at the very first of the avalanche. Bill Sefan stumbled, stood his ground momentarily, then went over backward with a grunt.

Only huge Myron Tubal was left standing. Legs straddled wide, and whooping hoarsely, he laid about right and left. The attacking natives hit him and bounced off like drops of water from a whirling flywheel. Modeling his defense on the principle of the windmill, he backed his way against a tree.

Here he made a mistake. On the lowest branch of that tree squatted a native at once more cautious and more brainy than his fellows. Tubal had already noticed that the natives were equipped with stout, muscular tails, and had made a mental note of the fact. Of all the races in the Galaxy, only one other, Homo Gamma Cepheus, possessed tails. What he *didn't* notice, however, was that these tails were prehensile.

This he found out almost immediately, for the native in the branch above his head looped his tail downward, flashed it about Tubal's neck and contracted it.

The Arcturian threshed wildly in agony, and the tailed attacker was

jerked from his tree. Suspended head-first and whirled about in huge sweeps, the native nevertheless maintained his hold and tightened that tail-grip steadily.

The world blacked out. Tubal was unconscious before he hit the ground.

TUBAL came to slowly, unpleasantly aware of the stinging stiffness of his neck. He tried vainly to rub that stiffness, and it took a few seconds to realize that he was tied tightly. The fact startled him into alertness. He became aware, first, that he was lying on his stomach; second, of the horrible din about him; third, of Sefan and Forase bundled up next to him—and last, that he could not break his bonds.

"Hey, Sefan, Forase! Can you hear me?"

It was Sefan that answered joyfully. "You old Draconian goat! We thought you were out for good."

"I don't die so easy," grunted the Arcturian. "Where are we?"

There was a short pause.

"In the native village, I imagine," Wri Forase said dully. "Did you ever hear such a noise? The drum hasn't stopped a minute since they dumped us here."

"Have you seen anything of—"

Hands were upon Tubal, and he felt himself whirled about. He was in a sitting posture now and his neck hurt worse than ever. Ramshackle huts of thatch and green logs gleamed in the early afternoon sun. In a circle about them, watching in silence, were dark-skinned, long-tailed natives. There must have been hundreds, all wearing feathered head-dresses and carrying short, wickedly barbed spears.

Their eyes were upon the row of figures that squatted mysteriously in the foreground, and upon these Tubal turned his angry glare. It was plain that they were the leaders of the tribe. Dressed in gaudy, fringed robes of ill-tanned skins, they added further to their barbaric impressiveness by wearing tall wooden masks painted into caricatures of the human face.

With measured steps, the masked

horror nearest the Humanoids approached.

"Hello," it said, and the mask lifted up and off. "Back so soon?"

For quite a long while Tubal and Sefan said absolutely nothing, while Wri Forase went into a protracted fit of coughing.

Finally, Tubal drew a long breath. "You're one of the Earthmen, aren't you?"

"That's right. I'm Al Williams. Just call me Al."

"They haven't killed you yet?" Williams smiled happily. "They haven't killed any of us. Quite the contrary. Gentlemen," he bowed extravagantly, "meet the new tribal—er—gods."

"The new tribal *what*?" gasped Forase. He was still coughing.

"—er—gods. Sorry, but I don't know the Galactic word for a god."

"What do you 'gods' represent?"

"We're sort of supernatural entities—objects to be worshipped. Don't you get it?"

The Humanoids stared unhappily.

"Yes, indeed," Williams grinned, "we're persons of great power."

"What are you talking about?" exclaimed Tubal indignantly. "Why should they think you were of great power? You Earth people are below average physically—well below!"

"It's the psychology of the thing," explained Williams. "If they see us landing in a large, gleaming vehicle that travels mysteriously through the air, and then takes off in a burst of rocket-flame—they're bound to consider us supernatural. That's elementary barbaric psychology."

Forase's eyes seemed on the point of dropping out as Williams continued. "Incidentally, what detained you? We figure it was all a hazing of some sort, and it was, wasn't it?"

"Say," broke in Sefan, "I think you're feeding us a lot of bull! If they thought you people were gods, why didn't they think we were? We had the ship, too, and—"

"That," said Williams, "is where we started to interfere. We explained—via pictures and sign language—that you people were devils. When you

finally came back—and say, were we glad to see that ship coming down—they knew what to do.”

“What,” asked Forase, with a liberal dash of awe in his voice, “are ‘devils’?”

WILLIAMS sighed. “Don’t you Galaxy people know anything?”

Tubal moved his aching neck slowly. “How about letting us up now?” he rumbled. “I’ve got a crick in my neck.”

“What’s your hurry? After all, you were brought here to be sacrificed in our honor.”

“Sacrificed!”

“Sure. You’re to be carved up with knives.”

There was a horror-laden silence. “Don’t give us any of that comet-gas!” Tubal managed to grind out at last. “We’re not Earthmen who get panicky or scared, you know.”

“Oh, we know *that*! I wouldn’t fool you for the world. But simple ordinary savage psychology always goes for a little human sacrifice, and—”

Sefan writhed against his bonds and tried to throw himself in a rage at Forase.

“I thought you said no one knew any sub-Humanoid psychology! Trying to alibi your ignorance, weren’t you, you shriveled, fuzz-covered, pop-eyed son of a half-breed Vegan lizard! A fine mess we’re in now!”

Forase shrank away. “Now wait! Just—”

Williams decided the joke had gone far enough.

“Take it easy,” he soothed. “Your clever hazing blew up right in your faces—it blew up beautifully—but we’re not going to carry it too far. I guess we’ve had enough fun out of you fellows. Sweeney is with the native chief now, explaining that we’re leaving and taking you three with us. Frankly, I’ll be glad to get going—Wait a while, Sweeney’s calling me.”

When Williams returned two seconds later, his expression was peculiar, having turned a bit greenish. In fact, he got greener by the second.

“It looks,” he gulped throatily, “as if our counter-haze has blown up in our faces. The native chief *insists* on the sacrifice!”

Silence brooded, while the three Humanoids thought over the state of affairs. For moments none of them could say a word.

“I’ve told Sweeney,” Williams added, glumly, “to go back and tell the chief that if he doesn’t do as we say something terrible is going to happen to his tribe. But it’s pure bluff and he may not fall for it. Uh, —I’m sorry, fellows. I guess we went too far. If it looks really bad, we’ll cut you loose and join in the fight.”

“Cut us loose now,” growled Tubal, his blood running cold. “Let’s get this over with!”

“Wait!” cried Forase frantically. “Let the Earthman try some of his psychology. Go ahead, Earthman. Think hard!”

Williams thought until his brain began to hurt.

“You see,” he said weakly, “we’ve lost some of our godlike prestige, ever since we were unable to cure the chief’s wife. She died yesterday.” He nodded abstractedly to himself. “What we need is an impressive miracle. Er—have you fellows anything in your pockets?”

He knelt beside them and began searching. Wri Forase had a stylus, a pocket-pad, a thin-toothed comb, some anti-itch powder, a sheaf of credits and a few odds and ends. Sefan had a collection of similar nondescript material.

It was from Tubal’s hip pocket that Williams withdrew a small black gun-like object with a huge hand-grip and a short barrel.

“What’s this?”

Tubal scowled. “Is that what I’ve been sitting on all this while? It’s a weld-gun that I used to fix up a meteor puncture in our ship. It’s no good; power’s almost gone.”

Williams’ eyes kindled. His whole body galvanized with excitement.

“That’s what you think! You Galaxy men never could see farther than your noses. Why don’t you come down to Earth for a spell—and get a new point of view?”

Williams was running toward his fellow conspirators now.

(Concluded on page 129)

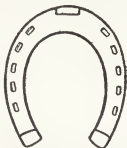
LILLIPUT IN EQUUSIA

By RICHARD TOOKER

A Modern Gulliver Finds the Lilliputian Horses of Grand Canyon Living a Wild, Free Life as in Prehistoric Days!

IN prehistoric geology, the field of the "lost world," the science wonder enthusiast finds a theme of almost never-failing interest. A poet has defined it as "the pathos of distance."

Most of us know, through science fiction at least, that the first horses to have one toe, or hoof, the *Hipparion* and *Equus*, were tiny creatures, no larger than a small deer. And before these, millions of years earlier, the three- and four-toed horses were often no larger than rabbits, sometimes as small as big rats.



Actual size of horseshoe for the little horses of Grand Canyon

A well-informed science fiction fan also knows that the Grand Canyon of Arizona, perhaps the widest and deepest chasm on the face of the earth to be worn down through all geological layers, reveals fossil traces of almost every epoch in the tree of life.

What the science connoisseur probably does not know, at least generally—although three specimens were exhibited at the Golden Gate Exposition two years ago—is that little horses, no larger than the *Pleistocene Equus*, exist not only in fossil traces in the Grand Canyon, but in real life, and very lively life, believe it or not, Mr. Ripley!

These little horses average thirty inches in height, and range from the size of a fox terrier to that of a small

Shetland pony. They live in a branch of the main Grand Canyon, known as the "Canyon of the Little Horses," so named by the Supai Indians, in whose traditions the tiny animals feature religiously.

There is nothing faked about them, nor anything miraculous when their origin is explained. That they are a decided novelty cannot be denied, though, and several thousand visitors to San Francisco's recent World's Fair paid twenty-five cents admission to see three of these pygmy specimens of the genus *Equus*. They were exhibited by Jack Tooker, well-known big game hunter and outdoor story writer, who probably knows more about the secrets of Grand Canyon than any white man living today.

Everything Grows Small

It is significant to begin with that everything that grows in the Canyon of the Little Horses, as well as similar clefts, is stunted. This apparently is due to a lack or shortage of certain minerals in the soil and to the subdued sunlight caused by towering cliffs, and the diffusing effects of great masses of colored rock. It is even difficult for the best photographers to get clear pictures at these depths in the Grand Canyon.

Most of us have read or heard that there are places in the Grand Canyon, and many of them, where man has never set foot and probably never will. The human eye can see into some of these inaccessible spots, but not all of them. The Little Horse Canyon is but one of the spots where not even the eye of the casual tourist can reach unless guided by some sage of the Supai Indians, or one of the two or three white men who know of the place and how to get there.

For years the little horses remained hidden in their almost inaccessible



Jack Tooker and two little horses beside a normal horse. The large horse weighs over 2,000 lbs.; the little stallion weighs 31 lbs. and the little mare 27 lbs. All three horses nearly the same age —approximately 4 yrs.

canyon retreat, their existence known only to the Supai Indians of Blue Water Canyon Reservation. That the Indians did not tell the whites about the little horses is quite understandable to any one who knows Indian psychology. Even educated Indians remain superstitious at heart.

Indians do not talk about their deeper secrets. We still do not know the formula of the liquid drug that makes a snake dancer immune to rattlesnake venom. And when we consider that the Little Horses have always had a deep religious significance in the traditions of the Supais, we can appreciate how reluctant they were to lead any white man to the sacred place, or even to tell a white man of their existence.

Friend of the Supais

It was Jack Tooker (distant cousin of the writer) who won his way into the confidence of an old chief of the Supai Indians years ago—Chief Supai Smiley. Old Smiley and his people grew to trust Jack implicitly, and

after exchanges of valued favors on several occasions, the old native finally told Jack the secret of the Little Horses, on condition that he would never reveal it while he, Smiley, still lived.

The veteran Canyon explorer and hunter kept his promise faithfully, after the old chief had guided him to the Canyon of the Little Horses. He never told a soul that the little freaks existed until Smiley died a few years ago, let alone reveal the devious route to the Little Horse Canyon.

When first observed, there were several small herds of the little fellows, perhaps a hundred in all. The colts were like cottontail rabbits and almost as frisky on their feet. Most of the mares were no larger than sheep, while the stallions were about the size of shepherd dogs.

The phenomena of these little horses proved to be nothing unexplainable by science, but they were an interesting case history in the study of evolution. Darwin would have adored them as proof of the influence

of environment on animal anatomy!

A brief resumé of their origin and history is necessary to a complete understanding of the case, and happily for the cause of science, this history is authentically known.

Secluded Canyon

The same Supai Smiley who told Jack Tooker about the little horses owned the original stock from which the Lilliputian strain sprang. More than a century before, Smiley as a young man, hard pressed by hostile Apaches, left three horses, a pinto stallion, a buckskin mare and her colt, in a watered and grassed canyon, while he went on afoot over terrain too rough for horses to the impregnable village of the Supais deep in the Grand Canyon.

It was winter, and heavy snowfall prevented Smiley returning for his horses until spring. When he did come for them he found that a huge, rock slide—a common occurrence in the Grand Canyon, had completely obliterated the steep trail leading down into the canyon bed, where the horses pastured.

Without the assistance of a block and tackle, not then known to the Indians, the horses could never be removed from their deep retreat. They were imprisoned, together with all their descendants until the line died out, in a winding canyon bed, boxed by the Colorado River at one end, and the rim of the canyon on the other.

But there was water and some grass, together with scrubby century plant, from which prehistoric cliff dwellers had made sugar. The horses lived and multiplied, changing with each generation to meet the demands of environment. Inbreeding, with merciless elimination of the unfit, contrived to make them small, wiry, something like mountain sheep.

The lack of sufficient calcium in the plant nutrition, and water at that depth, prevented full development of the bone structure. Also, weakened sun rays had an inevitable effect of denying the little animals sufficient B-complex vitamins.

Sacred Symbols

In addition, for a reason not so easily explained, they developed a sort of fur instead of hair. Owing to close inbreeding, combined with a paucity of lions to kill off the weak and deformed, a good many freaks were able to survive and beget more freaks.

At different times, when Jack Tooker secretly visited the Little Horse Canyon to see how the little fellows were faring through the years, he observed stubby-legged, big-headed monstrosities that resembled dachshund dogs. In marked contrast were the spindly-legged, wasp-bodied specimens.

Queer colors also were not uncommon. They developed a smoky blue color that seemed to blend with some of the rock masses of the canyon ledges where they leaped and scampered, sure-footed as mountain goats, and just as capable of hanging to a ledge no bigger than one's hand, until they could locate a more secure perch to bounce to on some adjacent wall or escarpment.

The Indians never took out any of the little horses, even after block and tackle became known and available. The reason for this was as before—superstition. Smiley and the tribal elders contrived to make a sacred god-symbol of the little horses. They had a taboo significance that only a medicine man could explain.

Pledge to a Chief

Supai Smiley finally died. (Jack is too good a sport to admit that he may have been impatient at times when Chief Smiley lived to be well over a hundred!) Now Jack was at last conscience-free to tell the world about the little horses, and even bring one of them out, although he still felt obligated not to bring other white men to the place.

The Supais did not approve of that. They made it clear that Jack was in special favor with them, and that he might lose that favor with possibly tragic results if he dealt too freely in the generosity of the gods.

It was a difficult task, long in performance, to bring proof of the little

horses out of the Grand Canyon. All the story cannot be told here. It would make an exciting and in some instances almost incredible book. Not until the last year of the Golden Gate Exposition was Jack Tooker able to realize his ambitions, after an expensive and dangerous expedition.

The little horses were wild, and in several instances committed suicide by leaping from cliffs at the brinks of which they had been cornered by Jack and his Supai helpers. At last, four specimens were caught and hoisted out of the canyon in a net attached to block and tackle.

One of these died from its struggles shortly after, but the other three were kept alive on a special diet including calcium and cod liver oil. In an enclosed pick-up truck, they were driven to California and exhibited to the public, which threatened to destroy them after all by feeding them too many cigarettes, of which they were discovered to be fond.

Let Them Live Free!

Reminiscent of the farmer who declared on beholding a circus giraffe for the first time that "there ain't no sech animal," was the reaction of a small boy on Children's Day, when they admitted only children at the

reduced rate of five cents a ticket.

Two smart-aleck youngsters entered together. One of the champion score-knowers looked upon the little horses with the jaundiced eye of "I'm eight, you're only seven," and inquired:

"Well, don't they know any tricks?"

"No," Jack replied, grinning. "They're just little horses, like the pygmies of Africa are little men."

"Aw, shucks, it's a fake!" the lad complained to his pal as they turned and sauntered off in true city-bred scepticism.

The captive little horses did not live long in spite of care that might have flattered a human infant. All three were dead about a year after being placed on exhibit. Their bodies have been stuffed and placed on exhibit in the museum of a prominent California institution.

But in the Canyon of the Little Horses, far from the roar and clangor of embattled mankind, the little horses are running today, wild and free as ever, their little stallions trumpeting from hidden hilltops like chargers of pixie land. Do not make the mistake of trying to find them! Let them live—and die—as free as men may wish they could die in these days of Armageddon's strife.

The Botanical Detective Wages Grim Battle Against the Renegade Scientist, Frome, to Save the Inner Planets from Doom and Destruction

IN

THE ETHER ROBOTS

*An Amazing Complete Novel Featuring
John Carstairs*

By FRANK BELKNAP LONG



COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE



Where the Editor, Readers and Science Fiction League Members Meet

AS YOU spaceteers adjust your gravity belts and settle back comfortably in the observer's seat to take off for this issue's flight of fact and fancy, we want to call your attention first to this month's cover. Two persons and two BMMs. Yeah, we've changed the motif on you this time. Instead of Bug-eyed Monsters, we have Big-mouthed Monsters.

But that's not what we set out to say. The space slingo we're tossing over your back fence is that the cover fits the story, and the story—**THE MOLE-CULE MONSTERS**—fits the cover. We caught the art editor and the artist in a weak moment—not to mention the author—and we nailed 'em, all three, to the instrument panel. So you birds in the second gallery can lay off the yammering. As for the quality of the story itself—well, that's a family squabble you can take up in the astrogation department with Sergeant Saturn!

REMEMBER "DARCONDRA"?

THERE'S something about the author of this month's fact article—*Richard Tooker*—which we think you ought to know. Author Tooker is one of the earliest contributors to science fiction magazines in the United States.

You old-time **THRILLING WONDER STORIES** readers will remember his yarn, **DARCONDRA**, by the way, which was published in the June, 1937, issue. This was one of his favorite stories.

GIANT AMONG MIDGETS!

IN THIS week's mail we have word from *Ross Rocklynn* in California. It seems that Ross has been inoculated with the idea of taking a common or garden variety of human runt and transporting him into a perilous situation where he is suddenly become a giant among midgets.

The outline sounded so good we gave Ross the green light signal on it. Perhaps we'll have more dope on this new novel to give you next issue.

WITH OUR EXPERTS

HERE'S a little story which we should have let you folks in on long ere this. We are reminded of it by the sight of

Henry Kuttner here in the office yesterday. Hank was in New York on a brief visit, and he looks swell. He'll be bursting forth in a new space song shortly.

But let's not get side-tracked. Captain Future was driving out to California on a vacation itinerary and he stopped by to see Hank and Mrs. Hank (*Catherine L. Moore*, to you science fiction readers) in the middle-West.

They had occasion to light the little oil burner stove in the Kuttners' summer cottage, and the thing got an over-dose of kerosene and caught on fire. All it needed was to be turned off. And three science fiction experts, Henry Kuttner, C. L. Moore and Captain Future, couldn't figure out how to handle the situation.

Finally the extra oil burned away and things were put under control. But it was funny while the excitement lasted. Yes, Captain Future is Edmond Hamilton, so you may put down your hand, Junior.

SPACE FLIGHT

SPEAKING of these fictional spaceteers and their blazing of the rocket trails brings to mind the fact that seriously planned space flight is not as far around the corner as that 1930 brand of prosperity.

In England right now, war or no war, the British Interplanetary Society is carrying right on with its plans to send a rocket ship to the Moon. According to H. George Franks, British journalist, the design of the ship has been decided and many preliminary experiments have already been made. Only the shortage of raw materials



holds up the furthering of the attempt.

The Germans have already advanced far in rocket experimentation, and as far back as 1934 Professor Guthrich, director of the State Observatory at Neubabelsberg, near Berlin, publicly staked out a claim on the Moon for Nazi priority. Perhaps the Third Reich is figuring on a place of retirement in exile when the Earth finally gets too hot for them.

But to avoid straying from the sublime to the ridiculous, space flight is shaping up as more than a fantastic dream. In fact, there is a book-length novel in the next issue of our companion magazine, **STAR-TLING STORIES**, which deals with a Moon flight. In this yarn, **DAY OF THE CLOUD**—but that's straying afield from **THRILLING WONDER STORIES**. And it's repetitious to tell you what's cooking for the next issue when you can read "Headliners in the Next Issue" elsewhere in this number for yourself!

AIR CHATTER

BEFORE we push on to other things we usually chat about in this department, let's briefly review what's happening in current aeronautics.

Two British inventors have been granted a patent on a new streamlined suit which makes a separate parachute pack unnecessary. No less than five experimental models of military airplanes utilizing two airplane propellers revolving in opposite directions on the same shaft are scheduled to make their appearance in the United States this year.

A new camera for taking brief time-exposure shots from a fast-moving observation plane is being developed. An airplane fuel hose that absorbs bullets is being manufactured to go along with the new bullet-proof gas tanks.

The helicopter plane is coming along, and now comes a new type of ship that can lift its tail like a bird in landing or taking off. And finally an airplane without propellers which is driven through the sky by rocket power has been patented.

This makes quite a wad for you sober and realistic spaceteers to chew over a while. Shove it under your pillow when you go to bed and dream over it. Perhaps next issue we can dig you up something that is really fantastic for you to mull over.

SCIENCE FICTION LEAGUE

AND now if you birds think we are going to go into a long song and dance about the **SCIENCE FICTION LEAGUE**, you'd better check your starboard firing chambers and re-chart your position. It's up to you if you want to join. The coupon's on this page.

If you want an emblem, just include fifteen cents in stamps with your coupon, and we'll send you the niftiest gold, blue and maroon button you ever sported. Sure, we still issue charters for new chapters.

AMATEUR STORY CONTEST

NEXT we move on to the business of the **AMATEUR STORY CONTEST**. Here's the latest ether flash:

AMATEUR CONTEST PRIZE WINNER

Willm Carver . . . **TIME TO REGRET** . . . story in this issue.

HONORABLE MENTION

Samuel Hoffman, Brooklyn, N. Y.
Charles Dings, French, New Mexico.
Lloyd Norse, Brooklyn, N. Y.
Nathan Ladner, Brooklyn, N. Y.
E. C. Evans, USN, Newport, R. I.

There you have the dope up to this minute. Yes, yes, we know that Samuel Hoffman has already appeared as a prize winner and his story has already been printed, but that doesn't change the fact that he won an honorable mention before he rang the bell with a winner. And we couldn't announce this before because we just didn't have a winner to head the list and give point to the announcement.

But the books are all straight again now, and we are waiting for new arrivals to click with the Contest Editor.

HERE ARE THE RULES

NOW, if you armchair astrogators think you have a story in your system which needs expression, here again are the contest rules for the benefit of those who came late.

Simply type your story in a length limit of from one thousand to six thousand words. Use standard 8½ x 11 white paper, double-space your lines, leave about a one-inch margin around the border of your paper, and number each page consecutively.

Just mail your manuscript to **AMATEUR STORY CONTEST EDITOR, THRILLING WONDER STORIES**, 10 East 40th Street, New York, N. Y. Enclose return postage, and sit tight until you hear from the contest editor.

(Concluded on page 126)

SCIENCE FICTION LEAGUE.
10 E. 40th St., New York, N. Y.

I wish to apply for membership in the
SCIENCE FICTION LEAGUE. I pledge
myself to abide by all rules and regula-
tions.

Name
(Print Legibly)

Address..... Age.....

City..... State.....

I am enclosing a stamped, self-ad-
dressed envelope and the name-strip
from the cover of this magazine (tear off
name-strip so that the name **THRILLING**
WONDER STORIES and the date can be
seen). You will send me my member-
ship certificate and a list of rules
promptly.

10-42

Use U. S. Stamps Only.

DOUBLE OR NOTHING

By
EANDO BINDER

*Joe Lake Gets Into Hot Water,
Keeping a Cold-Blooded Space
Pirate From Robbing Two
Places at the Same Time!*

A SPACE cabby runs into some funny things, especially when he hawks fares around the asteroids. Take me, for instance, Joe Lake, that night of August tenth, 1997. I say "night" because even in those days the Solar Time Board set up twenty-four Earth hours as the standard there. Everyone slept during the official night—if they didn't have other business, legit or otherwise.

Carl Mallow had other business. He came traipsing out of his Starshine Apartments, collecting rent, no doubt. He owned half the real estate on Ceres, and a dozen asteroids outright. He had raked up in the Asteroid Rush of '77.

I didn't like his face. Mean and thin it was, like Scrooge's. I used to see him quite a bit in the business section of Ceres. That guy never did anything but scowl and look like he hated the whole Universe.

"Taxi?" I said reluctantly, wishing anyone else had come along except that frown on two legs, but a cabby's got to make a living. "Anywhere in the asteroids."

"Yeah," he growled, stepping in. "Asteroid W-Forty-three. What're your rates?"

"Reach, fella," I said, "and hand over that belt you're wearing"



He would ask that, the skinflint! I looked at the orbit chart to see how far W-Forty-three was from Ceres at the moment. Some cabbies forget to look and make a price for half the distance, as though asteroids always stay in one place.

"Ten thallahs," I said, slamming the door and shifting into first. "Get you there in two hours."

"Ten thallahs?" he howled. "That's robbery! A taxi took me there the other day for eight!"

"Yeah," I snapped back, "at the risk of your life. I'm an A-one driver. See my license?"

He kind of winced, probably remembering a couple narrow squeaks with that scab driver.

"All right, all right," he said. "Get going. You talk too much."

For a minute I thought of taking him out to the Milky Way and dumping him for nothing. But then I remembered that business was slow and a fare was a fare.

I zoomed over Earthlane Boulevard to Outlet Five. During the rush hours, there was generally a line of cabs and cars waiting to get out into space, but it was late and we went right through, the photo-electric locks clicking and swinging ahead and behind. I pressed the buttons that sealed my cab and started the aero-heat unit. We were in space.

BEHIND us, Ceres and its domed city looked like a big, twinkling moon. A few minutes later, when I shot my cab into high, Ceres was just a bright point, like all the other points choking up the ether.

I steered for W-43 through the Jupiter-Mars Gap, passing a big liner with its blasts shooting out for ten miles behind it. Then I took the short-cut around Pivot Asteroid, which my A-1 license allowed me to do without getting picked up for reckless driving. Officer O'Leary waved at me from his station. I'd had many a drink with him at Spaceman's Rest.

Mallow was a clam for the whole trip, sitting there in the back with his face screwed up worse than the Pluto Badlands. Some poor client was probably overdue on rent or inter-

est payments. I wondered who it was. I soon found out. W-43 was new to me, a small asteroid about 500 yards in diameter.

"There's about forty thousand of those midgets," I told Mallow. "Too small to be seen from Earth in any telescope, so nobody knew they existed before space-travel."

"Yeah, I pick up little bits of information like that to entertain my fares. They like it."

"Mind your driving and deliver me at the door," this fare cracked.

"Okay!" I said nastily, swooping down like a comet and then jamming on the reverse blast brakes. When we slid through the automatic locks and plunked down in the landing yard, Mr. Carl Mallow was a nice, speechless green.

"You did that on purpose!" he accused when he had swallowed his heart.

"You know," I said, "if all the asteroids were stretched end to end, they'd reach from the Earth to the Moon. Think of that!"

Mallow glared, stepping out, but forgot about me as he turned to the house. Like most asteroid estates, it was a big, rambling, stone house with the seal-dome extending the aerated grounds about two hundred yards. The rest of the asteroid was bare rocks, in which you could amble around in a space-suit if you wanted.

"Wait here," Mallow said to me as the front door opened.

When a ship comes through the automatic lock, it rings a bell inside the house on most of the asteroid estates.

She was as pretty as a picture, framed in the doorway. Long, wavy, blond hair and eyes so blue that it made you think of summer skies on Earth. Right now her eyes were wide and worried.

"Oh!" she gasped. "Mr. Mallow. But father is so busy—"

Mallow fastened his snake eyes on her.

"No stalling, Miss Petrie. I'm here for the payment and I won't leave without it."

He began pushing past her. I don't know how I got there so quick, but

I managed to grab his arm.

"Take it easy, pal," I warned. "I was middleweight champ in the Interplanetary Golden Gloves once. I don't like to see ladies pushed around."

"You keep out of this!" Mallow said, but he didn't push again. "I own this asteroid and everything on it. I want to see Dr. Petrie."

The girl made a helpless gesture.

"Come in, then. Father is in the laboratory."

THE door closed behind them. I stuck my hands in my pockets and ambled over to the edge of the dome, looking out at the asteroid's rock fields. The stars were clear as beacons through the transparent metal of the half-shell that arched over the house and grounds. I was thinking of the girl and landlord Mallow when I saw something move under the stars, out there among the rocks.

"Hey!" I thought. "That can't be any animal or plant. The asteroids don't contain life. It must be my eyes."

I didn't see any more movement, so I got to thinking about the girl again. Pretty soon I was standing under a window at the side of the house. On tiptoe I could make out the room, crammed with more junk than a curio shop on Ganymede. It was junk to me, maybe, but they were scientific instruments to Dr. Petrie.

He was standing in the center of the room, his daughter at his side, and facing Mallow. Dr. Petrie was short and chubby-cheeked and looked tired. His voice drifted out to me through the half-open window.

"I've lived here twenty years," the scientist was saying. "My daughter, Mayda, was born here. It's our home. For twenty years we've watched the Jupiter liners go by like comets. We've shopped at Juno's colorful markets. We can't leave now—"

"I know your story," Mallow cut in his voice snapping like a whip. "Made good money on your inventions, bought this place, then lost heavy in the Depression of Eighty-seven. You were forced to mortgage and I have the mortgage. You're five payments in arrears and my patience is exhaust-

ed. After all, I'm a business man."

"My wife is buried out there," Petrie swallowed hard and begged: "Give me one more month. I'll complete one of my unfinished inventions and sell it outright."

I could see Mallow's flint heart right through his bony chest.

"Same old story," he sneered. "You're a has-been, Petrie, an old, broken-down crackbrain. You couldn't finish an invention if you tried."

"You can't talk like that to my father, you—you Plutonian spider!" cried Mayda. For a minute I thought she'd claw his eyes out, but she disappointed me. She got control of herself and coldly declared: "It so happens that Father *did* complete something recently."

"What is it?" Mallow asked, suddenly greedy. "I might consider taking an invention as payment, providing it has commercial possibilities."

Well, you'll have to take my word for the rest. Old Petrie took a belt off his work-table and strapped it around his middle. The belt had wires and gadgets on it, connected to one of those cosmic ray batteries that never run down. He pressed a switch and the belt kind of hummed. Nothing else happened.

"Well?" Mallow demanded sarcastically. "What does it do—blow soap bubbles?"

Tired and worried as he was, Dr. Petrie couldn't help grinning as he walked apart. I mean he split in two—No, wait. What happened was that two Dr. Petries were there. One stood where he was. The other one walked to the far side of the room. They were exact twins and they were both grinning.

I KNEW it was my eyes again, or that Cerian beer I had had after lunch. I was seeing double. I eased down to my heels to rest my toes, and took a good look around to make sure everything else was single. Then I raised to my toes and looked through the window again.

I still saw two Dr. Petries! Mallow was swinging his head back and forth, so I knew he saw it, too. Mayda was smiling proudly.

"Petrie!" Mallow gasped. "You're in two places at once!"

"Quite so," came the answer from one Petrie on one side of the room.

"I'll explain," came the other answer from the other Petrie on the other side of the room. "I call this my Doubler Belt, which emanates a force field that completely surrounds me. This force field creates a path along which I can move as a second, separate entity."

Something like that, it was. I'm no shakes as a scientist, so may be I left half of it out, but that was the idea.

"You mean there are two of you?" Mallow gulped.

"No," the first Petrie answered, shaking his head. "My physical body is actually whisking back and forth, through this path, at the rate of sixty oscillations a second. It's an optical illusion that there are two of me. Like a movie frame, the human eye sees any flickering faster than thirty-two times a second as continuous and solid."

Mallow got about as much of that as I did.

"Can you do two things at once?" he demanded.

"That's the beauty of this." One of the Petries nodded. "I exist in both places at once—physically—even though my body is shuttling back and forth constantly. I'm solid and real, in both places, for all practical purposes. Watch."

Petrie One raised his arms. Petrie Two put his hands behind his back, at the same moment. Petrie One picked up a book and read a line from it. Petrie Two picked up a different book and read. The two voices garbled together, just like two separate people talking at the same time.

"But we don't exist separately for each other," Petrie said, as the two of them walked together. They made the motion of shaking hands. The hands went *through* each other. Then the two scientists stepped together like two shadows and there was a *click*.

Petrie stood alone.

"You see," he went on explaining, "what the Doubler Belt does is make

possible an existence in two places at the same time. Look at it this way. Suppose you stand in one corner of the room and shout 'Here I am!' Then you run to the other corner of the room and shout 'No, I'm here!' Gradually increase the speed with which you run back and forth. Eventually you shuttle back and forth so fast that the human ear and eye cannot follow.

"The ear and eye are aware only of the moments you stop at each corner. When these periods of rest reach sixty times a second, you become solid-looking and real in both places. It's like a sixty-cycle electric light, which seems to shine continuously to the human eye, though it's blinking on and off all the time."

He paused for emphasis.

"And please note that you really exist in both places, for your body is whisking back and forth. Remember that it's no different from slow running back and forth, in which what happens is clearly visible. With the belt, though, the running is so speeded up that the transition of the body becomes undetectable. But the body—and with it the mind and personality—is actually in existence at both places, during alternate sixtieths of a second."

EVEN I began to understand what he meant then.

"There!" Mayda said. "No other scientist ever accomplished that before. It's a wonderful thing—"

"For what?" Mallow, with the demonstration over, was his old self, scowling and skeptical.

"Why, business men could use it, for example, to keep two appointments at once."

"Rubbish!" Mallow snorted. "There'd be too many legal tangles. Thanks for the demonstration, but it's just a good act for a magician's show. I can't use it and no one else can."

"That's what you think, nitwit!"

Those words came in a new voice near the door. Dr. Petrie, Mayda and Mallow whirled around to see who it was, and then sort of froze. I strained up another inch to see, too, and my

spine became one big, cold, rigid icicle.

A space-suited man stood in the door with a gun. His visor was open. He was a hard-looking hombre with a pair of twisty lips and a scar across his temple. It was "Scarface" Dolan! I knew him right away—one of the trickiest, meanest criminals, just fresh out of Red Spot Penitentiary. His gun was the new-style kind that shot without a sound.

"W—who are you?" Dr. Petrie gasped. "Stop pointing that gun at us. Get out of my house—"

"Shut your rockets," Scarface Dolan cut in. "I'm doing the talking. I came to case this joint for valuables, only now I ain't interested in anything except that belt. Hand it over!"

"Th-this b-belt?" Petrie stammered. "Why, what good would it do a thief?"

"Plenty, dimwit," Scarface drawled. "Ever hear of an alibi? Wearing that belt, I can be two places at once. I can rob a bank in one place, and I can be having a chat with a copper in another, both at the same time. Right, Professor?"

Petrie nodded dumbly. Scarface laughed.

"By the rings of Saturn, what luck I came here tonight! Got sent up for five years, for grand larceny. Now I can start fresh and always with a perfect alibi! I'll rob the asteroids blind. I'll always have a copper as my witness that I was right there before his eyes when the crime was committed." Scarface turned to Mallow. "Dope! And you turned this thing down. Now let's have the belt, Professor."

What was I doing all this time? Well, I was just gradually shaking the last liquid oxygen out of my blood and thinking fast. I had to stop Scarface Dolan in some way. I'd get him from the back. I started to move—

"No, you don't!" growled a voice in my ear. Scarface had a henchman! Something poked into my back and I knew it wasn't a lollypop. "Easy, or I'll spread your brains from here to Neptune."

Now don't get me wrong. I'm not scared of man or beast in a fair fight.

Once I even beat the ears off a Uranian bull-man for insulting Earth. But you can't laugh off a gun.

"Into the house, pal," the thug told me.

In a minute I was lined up with the others, facing two guns. Scarface leered at me.

"We had our eye on you, cabby, so you wouldn't interfere. We parked our ship outside the dome and picklocked our way into the back airlock."

I GAVE myself a good swift mental kick. I *had* seen something move before, out on the asteroid. If I'd investigated then, none of this would have happened.

"So long, suckers," Scarface said. "Thanks for the belt. Come on, Moonhead. We're ready for business. Big business!"

And they were gone. I watched from the window as they raced around to the back airlock of the dome and went through, zippering up their space-suits. The two figures faded among the rocks, heading for their ship.

I turned back. Carl Mallow was shrugging, now that the danger was over.

"I'm going," he said indifferently. "This incident makes no difference about the mortgage, Petrie. Understand that? I'll still have to foreclose."

"You would!" I gritted.

Mayda began crying on her father's shoulder. It was just too much to happen to them all at once.

"A vicious criminal has the Doubler Belt!" Dr. Petrie groaned. "He'll be able to do all he says with it, robbing and even murdering among the asteroids without being legally tracked down. Oh, what have I done? Can't we stop him somehow?"

I thought it was pretty grand of the old guy. With all his own troubles, he was thinking of other people and what trouble the Doubler Belt would bring them.

"I'm going," Mallow said again, impatiently.

"Yeah?" I retorted. "Well, you can walk then, right through space.

I'm going after Scarface Dolan!"

"No," Mayda said, smiling and choking down her sobs. "It's nice of you to make the offer for our sake, but you'd be risking your life. Besides, you can't drop your own taxi business."

I couldn't, at that. I had bills to pay. It might be heroic to drop everything and trail Scarface Dolan, but not very practical. I knew that, yet I liked the way the girl smiled at me for saying it, so I went on. What the devil, it didn't cost me anything to build myself up a little in Mayda Pietrie's eyes.

"If I could only do both things," I mumbled. "If we only had another Doubler Belt—"

"We have!" Dr. Pietrie cried, his face lighting up. And darned if he didn't fish another belt from a cabinet. It was just like the first one. "I made two, one as a patenting model. Here it is, Mr.—er—"

"Lake," I said weakly. "Joe Lake. Thanks."

I took the belt like it was a snake. What had I got myself into? It was one thing to talk being a hero, but another thing to do it. I might have welched on the spot, except for two things. Mallow gave me a nasty grin, and Mayda looked at me like I was suddenly a king. The last would have been enough, but the first was plenty, too.

"How does it work?" I snarled, strapping the belt on. "Hurry, before Scarface takes off!"

I hadn't seen the flare yet, beyond the dome. The two thugs had quite a hike to their ship. Dr. Pietrie pointed out the switch.

"Snap it on and then walk away. Your double will automatically form. After that, use your judgment."

I snapped the switch, but I didn't feel anything. I took a couple of steps.

"Hey, it don't work—" I began, a little nervously.

I turned and saw him—I mean myself. I was still standing there! Then my viewpoint seemed to switch and I was the one standing still, watching the other one—the other me—turn and stare as if seeing a ghost.

NUTTY? It's the craziest feeling, but I snapped out of it. I had no time to dawdle and scratch my head, or heads. Outside, a sudden flare lit up the other end of the asteroid. Scarface was taking off!

"You have a spacemobile?" I shouted.

Petrie nodded and ran to the garage beside the landing yard. As I jumped into his old touring spacemobile, he said:

"Just try to locate Scarface's headquarters and set the police after him. Don't risk your life."

I was steaming through the big lock of the dome in another ten seconds. It couldn't have been more than a minute after Scarface left, just time enough to locate his rocket flare by steady searching among the stars.

There it was! He was streaking away from the Sun, toward the outer fringes of the Asteroid Belt. I hove around and followed at a safe distance, keeping his blasts within sight.

But all the while I was doing this, I was also back at Petrie's, still talking to them. My double was, I mean. It's like being two people at once, without one interfering with the other. I knew everything I was doing in the space ship, yet I was also standing down on Asteroid W-43.

"I can't figure out which is really me," I said dizzily to Dr. Pietrie. "I'm in the space ship and I'm here on solid ground. Which is the real me?"

"Both are," Petrie tried to explain. "Your physical body is shuttling back and forth, sixty times a second. For a sixtieth of a second you're in the ship, then a sixtieth here, then a sixtieth there, and so on."

"I go right through the walls, back and forth?" I wanted to know.

"In a manner of speaking. The force field really creates a path in the sub-ether. Your atoms glide through matter without touching the atoms. You see—"

"Never mind, Doc," I said. "The important thing is that it works. Well, I guess I may as well get back to my taxi—this one of me. Come on, Mallow."

It wasn't till I was out in space, zooming back toward Ceres, that it

all hit me like a ton of meteors. A couple of hours ago I had been minding my own business, doing nothing to nobody. Now I was a Jekyll and Hyde, half of me chasing a desperado for all I was worth. What a dope I was, and all because a pair of blue eyes made me think of summer breezes on Earth!

I delivered Mallow at the Starshine Apartments on Ceres and took it out on him by charging twelve-thirty-seven. The extra two thallahs were for waiting, the thirty-seven zans for sales tax.

"Robbers, you and Scarface both!" he yapped.

"What, no tip?" I asked.

Mallow choked. "Tip? Sure I'll give you a tip. Never stick your nose in other people's business. I hope your double gets shot. When you see Dr. Petrie, tell him to have his furniture ready for removal."

"Okay, Mr. Mallow," I said politely. "Hope you find yourself in space some time in your pajamas."

Feeling better, I cruised to the theater district for late fares and had picked up a guy with a rich lady in a Martian spider-silk evening gown. The guy tipped me five for a short haul.

Other fares popped up, but all this while, of course, Joe Lake the Second was burning rockets after Scarface Dolan.

LEAVING W-43, the trail led toward the "Z" asteroids, those with orbits nearest Jupiter and farthest from the main centers. We began to pass handfuls that even the real-estaters didn't bother with, being so far out in the sticks. Here and there I saw the flare of a miner's lamp, where some lonely old prospector was scraping together a few bits of gold or radium.

It was deserted as Pluto, out here in the Z Band, an ideal spot for a small-time crook like Scarface to have a hideaway. Small-time? With the Doubler Belt, Scarface would soon get into the big-time. He'd make headlines and stand the Space Police on their ears with his foolproof alibi every time.

The other ship turned into the Z Band and finally zoomed down, two hours later, over a midget asteroid maybe a half-mile across. There was a camouflaged dome down there, painted with zigzaggy streaks, that I might have missed except for seeing Scarface land beside it. Keeping the horizon of the asteroid between us, I landed at the far end.

At this point, maybe I should have left and brought back the police. We had enough on Scarface to get him before a judge on petty larceny and at least get the belt back.

But I didn't go. I was feeling pretty good now. The Doubler Belt was working fine for me and I wanted to see the business through. I had nothing to worry about. I'd confront Scarface. If I got in trouble—*click*—and I'd be gone. It was perfect. I could have fun and still be back with my taxi business, safe and sound.

So I crawled into the car's regulation space-suit and sneaked up to the dome by foot. The magnetic soles kept me from bobbing up too high in the light gravity.

The dome was an old, abandoned mining post, where ore had been dug till the asteroid ran out of pay-dirt. With a little work, Scarface had re-lined the airlock and installed an aero-heat unit. From here he could operate all over the asteroids, where some of the richest people and corporations of the Solar System were located.

After a careful gander through a clear patch of the dome, I slipped in. The double lock hatches squeaked, but no one came running out of the mill-house. I got to a window of the shack and looked in.

There were three guys, but who was the third? Then I saw that two of them were Scarface. He was practicing with the belt already, with "Moonhead" watching kind of bewildered. Scarface One smoked a Venus cheroot, while Scarface Two pulled his gat and swept up imaginary loot.

"Perfect!" he chortled. "Moonhead, we're going to clean up. Where were you the night of so-and-so, when the Bank of Sol was robbed? Why, Judge, old boy, I was right in the Comet Club, minding my own busi-

ness, maybe having a little drink with Officer Jones, who was off-duty. Can't you lay off and give a guy a chance who's trying to go straight?" Scarface ended his monologue with a nasty laugh. "See, Moonhead?"

"Sure I see," Moonhead grinned. "When do we start?"

"Right now," Scarface said. "It's late at night, so I'll pull a trial job down on Ceres, maybe loot a rich buzzard's home for a starter."

The one-man crime wave was ready to start and there was only me, Joe Lake the cabby, to stop it. I thought fast. If I got over to the aero-heat unit and shut it off, I'd have the two thugs gasping like a fish.

I turned and fell flat on my face.

I HAD stumbled over some old mining pipes in the dark. It nearly knocked me out and I made enough noise to be heard clear out to Saturn.

When I scrambled up, a cone of light from a radium flashlight played over me. What looked like a cannon yawned in my face.

"Stand still, chump!" Scarface's hard voice ordered. "So it's the cabby, huh? Followed us here, eh? Say your prayers, mister—"

He was all ready to plug me on the spot. I almost laughed in his face. He didn't know I was a double. He didn't know that all I had to do was click the switch on my belt and I'd be out of his reach, way back on Ceres, hawking fares. Then I could send the police here pronto.

I pressed the switch. Nothing happened, or it was the wrong thing. I was still looking down the barrel of the gun. I was single again—but here, not on Ceres!

A chunk of solidified helium that once was my heart sank down toward my feet. Back on Ceres, I had been cruising down Luna Lane. I blinked out there, disappeared. What a moment! The real me, the one and only me, was still facing Scarface's gun.

I didn't know how or why it happened. I didn't have time to think. It was a good thing, maybe, because the next second I snapped the switch again. *Bing!* My double was back in the cab, wrenching the wheel over

before the cab climbed the curb, driverless. Boy, that was a narrow squeak!

But now my double was facing Scarface and the gun again. It was like a nightmare that I couldn't get out of. If he shot, would this me die, and the other stay alive? Or what? I wasn't sure any more. I didn't know what it was all about. I should have checked up better with Dr. Petrie.

But Scarface didn't shoot.

"Wait," he said. "I'm a chump. Why take a chance on a murder rap? This cabby is going to be bumped off at five A.M., when I get back. They'll find his body on another Z asteroid, but Scarface didn't do it, because Scarface was at the Comet Club all the time. One of me is going there now to establish my alibi. The other is going to pull a job, like I said, and then come back and plug this snooper. It's perfect!"

Well, it gave me time, anyway, about four hours. That might be time to figure this mess out.

Scarface left. Moonhead sat across from me with his gun ready. I was roped in a chair. They hadn't stripped off my space-suit, so they didn't know my Doubler Belt was underneath. I was safe for the time being, but sweating—both of me.

BACK on Ceres, Joe Lake the First was racing in my cab for Asteroid W-43. I had to see Dr. Petrie and find out what I didn't know about this double business. I made it in an hour and a half. By luck, no speed cop crossed my course, or he would have thought I was going to a fire on Mercury.

I barreled down on W-43 like a meteorite. Dr. Petrie and Mayda were dozing in chairs, waiting to hear from me. As I stepped in, the scientist jumped up.

"I wish I hadn't let you do it," he said worriedly. "I forgot to tell you two important things, Mr. Lake. If you snap off the belt at either end, you have no idea at which place you will become single. It depends solely on which sixtieth of a second you strike, here or there."

That explained a lot. Snapping the

switch in front of Scarface, I had struck the sixtieth of a second there. I told my story. Petrie shuddered.

"Bad, very bad," he groaned. "Luckily you turned the belt on again while the tubes were still hot and the path was still open, otherwise you would have stayed single there."

"And what's the second thing, Doc?" I asked, wanting to know the worst.

Petrie swallowed. "Any injury to one of you is an injury to both."

"In plain words," I mumbled, my hair turning a little gray, "if Scarface plugs me there, I go out like a light. Both of me. *All of me!*"

"You're doing this for us," Mayda said gently, putting her hand on my arm. "Give it up. Snap the switch now. If you materialize out there, snap it again. Sooner or later you'll hit the right split-second here."

I shook my head. "My hands are tied at Scarface's place. The wrong snap again here and I'm stuck there for good. Besides, I'm going to see this through."

I waited long enough to see her eyes flash like blue jewels at me. Then I said:

"One thing is certain—I can't bring in the police now. If they pick up Scarface at the Comet Club, it only establishes his alibi better. Scarface Two goes on. I don't know where he is. I only know he'll come back to his asteroid."

"Then we'll send police there," Dr. Petrie said, "to rescue you."

"No good," I answered, slow and thoughtful. "The police would pick up Moonhead, but Scarface would still be free with an alibi." I was thinking things out and I made up my mind, heading for the door. "Guess there's only one way out. I'll just have to rescue myself."

Mayda looked kind of startled, like she hoped I would stay, this one of me, anyway.

"Be—be careful," she faltered.

"I shouldn't have let you start in the first place," Dr. Petrie groaned again. "Losing my home is bad enough, but causing an innocent bystander all this trouble— Oh, I wish I'd never invented the Doubler Belt!"

"Listen, Doc, I'm enjoying this," I lied.

Then I hightailed before they saw different.

I GUNNED my cab for the outer asteroid, feeling like the Lone Space Ranger on the radio, who was always dashing for the showdown against mighty stiff odds. The nearer I came to the hideout, the closer my feet got to absolute zero. If I only had a gun! But I didn't, being an ordinary civilian.

I landed next to the hidden space-mobile. Twice I'd landed here, in two different ships, but I hoped I'd get away just once. It didn't seem like asking much.

I sneaked into the dome, like before. Scarface didn't suspect I was a double, so he hadn't locked it. Creeping to the window of the shack, I took a quick gander. I knew what I'd see, naturally, because my other self was tied to a chair inside. Moonhead was playing Martian solitaire. He had a full view of the door and window by raising his head. His gun was on the table within easy reach.

Now what? Time was short. Scarface was due back any minute. I had to free my double before he arrived.

I figured out my best bet and began making noises with my feet outside the window. Moonhead leaped up and edged to the side of the window, looked out. I had already raced around the corner to make more noises.

Moonhead took a quick look at my double in the chair, to see I was tied well, then came out. That was all I was waiting for. I climbed in through the window and began opening the knots. "Hello, Joe," I couldn't help cracking.

"Hello, yourself," I said back to myself. "If you get back on Ceres with a whole skin, you're luckier than you deserve."

I yanked those ropes off as fast as I could, but just as my double was free and jumped up—

"Reach, wise guys!"

Moonhead had come back just a second too soon, and there I was, stuck before his gun. I was really stuck, this time, both of me.

"Why, you're twins!" Moonhead suddenly gasped. "You're doubled, like Scarface."

His gun wavered from one to the other of us, as though he wasn't sure which one to plug in case we attacked. All at once it came to me, clear as a flash. I still had a fifty-fifty chance.

"Yeah, Moonhead," I gritted. "You have a gun, but it won't do you any good. You can't shoot me. Bullets won't touch me. Didn't Scarface tell you?"

Could I talk him out of it? Was Moonhead just thick enough to believe it? I separated and crept up on him from two sides, grinning confidently for his benefit. I wasn't grinning inside.

Moonhead sweated and looked like he was going to bolt. Instead he shot at one of me, pointblank. The bullet came shrilling at me. I remembered Petrie's words. If either of me was injured, both of me automatically were, because it was the same body shuttling back and forth.

One of me was shot right through the stomach, but I didn't fall!

The next second I was on him, both of me. We twisted his gun away and clouted him on both sides of the head at once. I've always had a good right. Here I had two good rights. Moonhead went down and out.

WHEN Scarface walked in, ten minutes later, I met him at the lock with Moonhead's gun in his ribs.

"Reach, fella," I said nonchalantly, "or I'll put more holes in you than the Moon has craters. And hand over that belt you're wearing."

I went on as a kind of crafty gleam came to his eye.

"Yeah, I know this is only your double. Snap the switch. If you materialize here, I've got you. If you become single at the Comet Club, I'll have you picked up before you can leave Ceres. Either way, I've got both of you."

"Ulp!" was all Scarface could say.

He dropped the sack of loot he was dragging along and he materialized right in front of me, as luck would have it.

I was back at Asteroid W-43 when the Sun came up and lighted the place like a golden palace. I could see why Dr. Petrie and Mayda hated to leave it after twenty years. I arrived double, delivering Petrie's spacemobile and also my cab. One of me carried the sack Scarface had brought back. The other handed over the missing belt.

"Here you are, Doc," I said. "Scarface won't be back. He and Moonhead are hightailing for Neptune to lie low. I could have sent him up for five years, with the belt as evidence to blow his alibi apart, but I didn't want to bother."

"YOU let him go?" Dr. Petrie bleated.

"Sure. He did us a good turn. But wait, I'll tell you the story."

When I was done, Petrie looked space-shocked.

"You say Moonhead fired at you pointblank—or at one of you—and you weren't touched? Impossible!"

"I figured it out myself," I said as Mayda's eyes played over me like my stock was hitting the roof. "I knew I had one chance, even if Moonhead fired. Moonhead fired at the wrong one of me. The bullet went *through* me!"

Petrie caught on.

"I see. He shot at the one which, just at that sixtieth of a second, wasn't there. A bullet, of course, moves so fast that it was gone by the time, in the next sixtieth of a second, you had materialized. Wonderful, Lake, my boy! I didn't think of that myself, in all my investigations with the Doubler Belt."

"Still"—Mayda shuddered a little—"you took a terrible chance. But why did you let Scarface go free for his crime? He robbed someone."

"Sure, and here's the loot," I answered, opening the bag and spreading about a hundred grand worth of jewelry before them.

"But we can't keep it!" Mayda gasped.

"No," I agreed, "but we can claim a reward. Let's say five thousand. Half is yours."

(Concluded on page 128)



A Department Conducted by SERGEANT SATURN

O KAY, relax, you space-dizzy kiwis. Before we open all the rocket banks and jimmy up the safety valve so you pee-lots can go roaring down the gas-ways in fiendish delight, the old Sarge has a little rocket dust of his own to spread.

You bozos don't know how hard we work to keep these various departments separate and distinct from each other, but now and then they get tangled up like a pair of Venusian vines in spite of all we can do. I have here a couple of letters and a penny postal the context of which belongs in the big chief's department—*Looking Forward*. But all the mail is dumped on Saturn's desk, so I have to handle it with one hand while I keep you junior astrogators subdued with a rocket wrench in the other.

First, we will deal with the Science Fiction League. I sort of swell up with pride at this request from one of our lady astrogators. You kiwis know how the old Sarge feels about gal pee-lots.

Dear Sergeant Saturn, please send me one of your SFL buttons. And could you tell me if there is a SFL club in my area? I have been reading science fiction for years, and your three magazines are my favorites—*Mrs. K. E. Herkog, 1901 West 13th St., Houston, Texas*.

And here's another sort of SFL request from Bonnie Scotland. Read this one.

Dear Sergeant Saturn, I am a regular reader of TWS and, wishing to join the SFL, I wrote to the director of Chapter 34. He informed me that the chapter had to close down in 1940, but referred me to the mother chapter. I enclose one shilling in stamps for my membership fees. Is it possible to correspond with a person near my own age—eighteen to twenty—in America, who belongs to a SFL chapter?—*Wm. J. Finlayson, 10 Burnside Gardens, Clarkston, Glasgow, Scotland*.

All right, you American SFLers, how about somebody answering both these requests?

Now I have to reply to Buddie Warren of 5237 Harper Ave., Chicago. Buddie craves information on the Amateur Prize Story Contest. Since you don't read the chief astrogator's *Looking Forward* department, Buddie, where all such information is tabulated, the old Sarge will assure you briefly that the contest runs constantly and you must use a typewriter and you can submit as many stories as you like, win, lose, or draw. And the rest of the rules you need to know are to be found in *Looking Forward*.

And here's an open letter to Author Eando Binder. And, blast my cyclotrons, if it doesn't deal with rocket travel—a business the editor seems to be just getting hep to, but which is an old story with Saturn and his trained circus here in the astrogation chamber.

VIA ROCKET

By Henry Rossman

Dear Mr. Binder: I have just completed reading *VIA JUPITER*, your sensational THRILLING WONDER STORIES yarn, and I place great credence in your foresight. I have been following with interest the progress being made with the atom-smashing machine, and I believe a trip to Mars will soon be a reality—*Cottage One, Bayberry, Pa.*

No, Henry, we will not point your letter out to the editor, who went overboard on the rocket "sit-chee-a-shun" this issue. Let him stew in his own gravity juice. But Pilot Binder and the old space dog both acknowledge your comment with pleasure.

And so, it seems, we've eased off in a smooth start on our periodical shake-down cruise for junior astrogators. Let's keep accelerating.

An ether flash from the old fur center:

FIRST REPORT

By Jack Addleman

Dear Sarge: Here is my application for membership for the SFL. I am also sending in my first report ahead of time.

Now to get down to business. Last week I saw your cover on the June issue of TWS, and quickly bought it, thinking I was in for some swell reading.

But I was almost sick after I had read the first story, *THUNDER TO VENUS*. Ugh!!! The book was saved by Wellman's *ASTEROID CASTAWAYS*. Wellman ranks high with me as does Hamilton, Bond and a few others.

BRITISH THERMAL UNITS was so-so, but not as good as the cover made it seem.

The other shorts were good as "shorts" go with *LAST DISAPPEARANCE* heading the list.

My opinion of TWS is that it would be better reading with more stories by Wellman, Hamilton, Bond and other such headliners.

Well, I have to blast off now—1921 A Bacon St., St. Louis, Missouri.

Nice going for a first report, Kiwi Addleman. You get your outfit from the supply galley and sit right in with the other pee-lots here in the control room and bay at the moon whenever any author steps on

your tail or kicks any of your pet theories around. But remember that one man's drink is another man's headache. And that's not paraphrasing; that's paralysis.

Speaking of headaches, here comes one now from a gal kiwi.

TWS OKAY, BUT—

By Trena Daggett

Dear Sarge: I thought I would write to let you know that I like your magazine on the whole, but I have a few things I object to. For instance, the title—why don't you choose a title for your mag that is more in keeping with such a dignified magazine.

I would like also to rate your stories, and tell how I liked them and why.

First on my list is "Asteroid Castaways." That story had everything—humor, adventure, romance of a sort, and a really good background for a plot that satisfied me except for one thing—where was our hero, Patch, headed for when he left for parts unknown, at the end of the story? It sort of makes a serial out of it. 2. "The glory of U. S. L."—a swell story. I'll be waiting for Westwood next ish. 3. "False Dawn"—good story, but where did the author ever get such a title for it? Why not a title that really has some bearing on the story? And how about a better ending? 4. "Dames is Poison"—a good humor story. 5. "Thunder to Venus"—a rather common plot, I'm afraid, but a pretty fair treatment of it. 6. "Last Disappearance"—a little flat, but I shouldn't kick—I couldn't do any better. 7. "British Thermal Units"—really a poor story. The plot is too old—"mad man about to destroy world is destroyed by handsome hero." It's a wonder there wasn't a girl somewhere in the background to tell him how wonderful he was!

The cover was pretty good, but why did you have to repeat the picture inside? I don't think paintings reproduce very good in black and white. The cover is still quite beeing now—Lake-wood Park, Ailyn, Wash.

See here, Pee-Jotess Trena, did you ever pick a chicken? You must have. For you plucked the June cargo plumb to pieces without pausing for breath. You're a gal who knows her own mind and likes and dislikes, so far be it from the old Sarge to start an argument with you. You ask only one question, and I'll take time out right here to answer it for you.

The reason for reproducing a black and white of the cover as the heading illustration of the story it fits is this: We have a big class of junior astrogators who have eye trouble. They can't seem to match the cover with the story, oh, very, very often. So we thought we'd try riveting the cover painting and the interior illustration and the story together so there wouldn't be any argument. And, by all the space apes of the Galaxy, you give us one.

Which only goes to prove that a space sergeant just can't win. So let's pass the dice to this citizen of the Universe now coming up.

DESTINATION—TWS

By Lenwood Martin

Dear Sarge: Prepare yourself for a long letter attack. This is my first comment on any magazine. I want to congratulate you on the fine stories printed, especially "Thunder to Venus" and "Asteroid Castaways," which I termed the best although it was shorter. This is the type of story (Asteroid Castaways) I like. The female was daring and frank, but not exactly coquettish. Most

[Turn page]

Keep Faith with Them



Join the work of the Navy Relief Society and BACK UP THE NAVY'S FIGHTING MEN

TO HELP THE NAVY MAN and his dependents, his widow, his orphaned child and his mother, is the purpose of the Navy Relief Society. Now, with the risks of war, and a greatly expanded Navy, with a larger Marine Corps and the inclusion of the Coast Guard Welfare, the Society needs your help.

No amount is too small. None too large. Every contribution will help to free from worry more than 500,000 men in our Navy, Marine and Coast Guard* Services.

**through Coast Guard Welfare*

President Roosevelt says . . .

"There is nothing finer than to build up this fund for the Navy Relief Society. I urge you to do your utmost, and do it now!"



CLIP ENROLLMENT COUPON, below, and send it to the Navy Relief Society. Give all you can—and give today!

Checks should be made payable to Navy Relief Society and sent to National Citizens' Committee, 730 Fifth Ave., New York City.

I want to help the Navy men and their families. Enclosed please find my contribution of \$.....

Name

Street

City State.....

of these young sprouts like less women and more adventure, I like both. I still further want to say that your mag is best in comparison with some mags printed in a larger format.

I didn't think much of the cover because it wasn't surprising or unusual—it wasn't far in the future.

I'm not blasting you or the authors, Sarge, because this is not like me. I know that an author can't continually turn out good stories and can't always figure what to write about. Sometimes an unheard of author turns up a good story as well as the most experienced ones. I think mags are very educational. I have read hundreds in the past six years. I've read detective mags, too, but lately I've read only scientific mags, of which I lay my hands on as many as I can find in book stores. Some of my associates with whom I work think I'm nutty. But that is because they haven't learned what real information is on the inside of science-fiction covers. Before I cast off I want to say that my next destination will be the Aug. issue of the TWS and the TWS Annual.—No address.

Maybe you've forgotten where you live, Kiwi Martin, but you certainly speak an intelligent space slingo. And perhaps you have something there when you say that scoffers—presumably frightened off by the imaginative covers—don't know what goes on inside our covers. We have anything from ein stein of bock to Einstein, Albert, with no holds barred and a dash of Xeno to act as a fuse. You think we ought to put on a campaign to make the ordinary folks science fiction conscious? Sort of a Sergeant Saturn field day, huh?

Anyway, I hope you like the August issue.

Comes now a proton broadside from up Wisconsin way.

MORE SCIENCE SUSPENSE

By Robert Blahnik

Dear Sergeant Saturn: If your moisture-proof space mufflers can hear ground waves correctly and your steel-diagramed crown can interpret some healthy science criticism, I'm prepared to blast you clean out of your cock-eyed eternity. How's about stepping out of that steel-clad frame and that wacky space-horse of yours and printing some stories with more science-suspense? Less grave-yard lingo, Sarge, old soak. Omit those pipe-line details and give us readers the blood-curdling action, slappy heart-thumps and super satisfaction we're paying for. Clamp down on your steel-clad editors to give us an occasional story with a pepper-hot feminine attitude to them. Eh, Sarge?

"Thunder to Venus" was a corking good whip-cracker, Saturn, old boy, but the illustrations lacked thrilling science expression. Weak and distasteful like your moon-cured cigarettes. I'll see cigars, Sarge!

"Last Disappearance" was okay for an amateur yarn. Professionally speaking, it rated about six of your plugged Saturn coins in my book of Science Power. Although the complete story was a "honey" of a yarn, I felt a few "King'-bees" stinging at my flexible head cones. Maybe because the author left out the "Queen"-bees. Hec-haw! Anyway, the plot came to the point and the climax had plenty of whippy wonderment and interest (interest that not only held, Sarge, but also backed-fired like Neptune's gas chamber on Mars). As a whole though, the story was balanced as good as a live Venus on one of your moon-beamed pedestals. Hec-haw! Xeno sniffer. Cookies in any space-drip's language, eh, pilots?

"Asteroid Castaways" held a rare bit of interest along the Science-line, but it was also a wee stale from our estimating and likewise repeating it's Rocket-blasted contents. Three too many space characters, Sarge, old bean. Too petrified.

"The Glory of U.S.L." stood quite near the top of my metal foil rating book. The plot was a bit breezy too—a wind-blasting breeze, Mr. Saturn. And how!

"British Thermal Units" was positively good. Just a bit corny in spots, but really good, Mr. Pee-lot brains. It was surprising and something new under my high-horizon sun.

"Dames is Poison" was the very best story, but too brief for the plot, Sarge. A sound professional. Nice style of writing, hack-head. Really nice—no dope.

"False Dawn." Boy! that was a prize-winner if there ever was one! Really and truly an enjoyable yarn, Sarge. I swear it on a stack of space oops. The story held it's own till the very end of my steel-clad crown.

TWS magazine rates A-1 with me, old soak. Your other two companion magazines are the same, except that the type is too unreadable. Make the print as large as a space-monkey and you'll be doing every reader a favor, rocket slusher! Write in, boys, and tell the old piker the truth. Results might follow if the Sarge isn't drunk from his chamber tube fluids!

Oh—oh—here comes my space-car, Sarge. I gotta be flying to the land of Venus and keep that tea-time date with Sally. Don't take any wooden rocket slugs, old soak!

Love's sweet stardust to you pee-lot apes and a blasted pip—pip, old man!—212 E. College Ave., Appleton, Wis.

Say, what goes on here? What kind of spatial double talk are you putting to me, Pee-lot Blahnik? The man driving that space-car of yours isn't wearing a white plastic suit with a big K in neon lights on his cap, by any chance, is he?

Never mind. I gather that you like spacing around with the old Sarge and that you find the cargo stimulating but would prefer a trifle more emphasis on femininity. Privately the old space dog agrees with you, but you duck your own shower of brickbats that you have raised from the starkly masculine section of the grandstand. I'm heading back to the astrogator's seat—that Xeno is killing me.

THE HECK WITH IT

By Jerry A. Mace

Dear Sarge: Well, I'll be a twin-tailed comet! Some space happy recruit has been racing his cyclotron, Sarge.

I'm out of blood; Martian green, Plutonian silver on Tellus red. I don't care which just so it platters from Vulcan to Ganymede.

I'm fighting mad and ready to blast anything in my path, be it meteorite, nova or a certain spaceworm called Westwood who probably consumed too many of my own special Xeno Zombies and, brain-looping like a Jovian Flutterdove, decided to be an author.

It isn't bad enough that he has to smear my name throughout his yarns, but he's dropped on Jupiter. Oh, no, he isn't satisfied with that—he has to tack "Screwtube" onto it. "Screwtube Mace." Great Galactic Greenhorns, shoot the Xeno to me, Zombiie, Rookie Westwood will be more than acceleration-dizzy if I ever—oh, well.

Just to start at the beginning Sarge, old Come Harple, I note there is, as usual, a cover. They must be here to stay. Anyway, it depicts more faithfully than usual a scene from a story contained therein. A flagon of Xeno to dauber Bergey.

Best of this month's crop of credulity taxers is THUNDER TO VENUS. A good substantial yarn, solid as neutronium. That green gas must be potent medicine—but scribbler Millard should tickle his tonsils with a Xeno Zombiie and see if he can remember which comet clipped him.

Next comes ASTEROID CASTAWAYS. Rather good for Wellman, although his dreams are peopled by flowery-headed Mar-

tians. I've roamed the trackless void from Vulcan to Phito and haven't have I see so much as one Chrysanthemum-headed Martian. I even downed three Xeno Zombies in a row, but all I could get was a regulation biped Martian with a garland of Saturnian sectional snakes in his hair and three months of meteor sweeping off Mercury from his zipper.

In third place we have DAMES IS POISON. Regardless of what anyone might say, I had Pete Manx highly entertaining and suggest K. Kent get busy on a novelet. I suggest further that Pete be sent back to the days when pirates made the high seas their camping grounds. He could doubtless out-buccaneer the buccaneers.

FALSE DAWN, THE GLORY OF THE U.S.L. LAST DANCE, APPEARANCE and BRITISH THERMAL UNITS rate four, five, six and seven respectively and neither require nor inspire comment.

You might amputate a short story and enlarge "The Reader Speaks." Perhaps we could then tune in on something besides a lot of Fan Club Phitons and assorted space tramps who have nothing better to do than heckle the old Sarge. It gives me the gravity bends every time one of them pans your chatter. If they don't speak the language or at least understand it they should be tossed out the air lock sans space suit.

But all means, let's have that out-size issue. And a Weinbaum omnibus. And more Pete Manx. And an end to this "Screwtube" business. And a Xeno Zombie—Hq. Co., 757 Tk. Bn., A.P.O. No. 351, Desert Training Center, California.

Well, thanks for the ride, Pee-lot Mace. Next time I'll bring my own space raft along so I can bail out when the going gets too rough. But, no fooling, I'm glad your ethergram came along just when it did, because—lookie what's coming up in your wake. A letter, not to the old Sarge, but to the Editor:

SATURN IS TERRIBLE

By Cecil Purdy

Dear Editor: I think the June TWS was the best one so far this year. The best stories were:

1. "Thunder to Venus," by Joseph J. Millard. Boy, oh, Boy, what a story—more by Millard, by all means.
2. "Dames is Poison," by Kelvin Kent. Pete Manx at his best.
3. "The Glory of U. S. L.," by N. J. Westwood. I hope this series will be as good as the via series. Get rid of Sergeant Saturn and his jug of Xeno; they're terrible. Get Brown back for the cover and Paul for the inside, and you will have two good artists. Keep Pinlay; he is your best artist. How about more time travel tales? Well, so long for this time.—Dullman, Ala.

Well, I honestly tried to get the chief astrogator to answer this stab in my back, but when I showed him Kiwi Purdy's complaint all he said was, "Well, he's right. Now get back into the control room and answer his fire. That's what we hire you for."

So, Pee-lot Purdy, if you'll accompany me to the woodshed. . .

But you like the cargo, so how am I going to pin your long ears back when you show such appreciative space aptitude? Anyway, I'll pass your comments on to the art department.

Here comes another spaceyard-bird with a bellyache.

AREN'T WE ALL?

By Charles Nutt

Dear Private Saturn: Yeah! You ought to be de-ranked after that August, 1942, issue of

TWS. "Gad!" I examined out loud as I finished reading it. Oh, well, we ain't all perfect, so I will attempt to rate the copy.

Cover: Awk! Ye ancient gallstones, and other expressions denoting utter disappointment! Honestly, Belarski is downright punk at times. Why the flag on the cover? Why not in the contents page—or somewhere inside the book?

Illustrations: Say, does every SF magazine have an option on the one—the only—the Leo Morey? Gosh, one can't pick up a magazine without seein' a bum pic and his animated signature at the bottom. And the same for Wesso, (although a little better). Try to get Marchioni back. Also try to obtain Schonburg, August, Dun, Jim Mooney, H. W. MacCaully and the master, Frank R. Paul. Incidentally, that was the worst Pinlay I have ever seen. Personally I think Morey could do as good.

Lead Novel: Swell! Nearly makes up for the other bad eggs.

Novelet: Oh, nuts, after that tremendous build up you gave it. "The Meteoric Mr. Myrtle" certainly was a let-down.

Shorts: Everyone was absolutely obnoxious except Selwyns "The Hunter of the King Planet," which was only fair.

Readers Page: I agree with "The Hermit of Schenectady" in that it needs a little more life and less bouquets which is all you've been printing for nigh onto a year, with more stiff brickbats (when needed) like the one you are now reading.

Now don't think I am one of those guys who write to a mag just to see their gem of correspondence in print, 'cause I'm not, but the outrageous issue you presented us is inexcusable. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?—3025 Alameda St., Chicago, Ill.

Pardon the subtlety of the caption to your
[Turn page]

ATTENTION, FANS!

8 SCIENTIFCTION 25c TITLES

Here's your opportunity to obtain a complete set of outstanding scientifiction titles, printed on excellent grade paper, attractively bound. Six individual booklets.

SEND FOR THEM TODAY!

The titles include THE IMMORTALS OF MERCURY, by Clark Ashton Smith; THE SPECTRE BULLET, by Thomas Mack; AVENGING NOTE, by Alfred Sprisler; THE SHIP FROM NOWHERE, by Sidney Patzer; THE MOON MIRAGE, by Raymond Z. Gallun; FLIGHT OF THE AEROFIX, by Maurice Renard; THE INVADING ASTEROID, by Manly Wade Wellman; MEN FROM THE METEOR, by Pansy Black.

BOOK DEPT., 14th Floor, 10 East 40th St., New York
Enclosed 50c in coin (or) stamps. Please rush my set of 8 scientifiction titles.

Name

Address

City..... State.....

T.W.S.-16

letter, Charlie. As Joan Davis continues to remark, "The yuk-yuks are okay, but the yokes are yousy." All I gather from your deluge is that you graduated from picture books when you left the kindergarten and all that interests you is the printed word. Okay, you read the inscriptions while the rest of us gaze occasionally at the scenery.

I'll just put you at work on the chart desk and let the other kiwis do all the star gazing. Now I can't take any more time with you as there are other beefs in the ice box.

A DECADE OF WONDER

By Oakley Blevins

Dear Sarge: Just finished the June ish of TWS. Here is my rating for the fine stories in the ish. (1) "Thunder to Venus," 100 percent. Next comes "Asteroid Castaways," then "The Glory of U. S. L." "Dames is Poison" More of Manx. "False Dawn," O.K. "Last Disappearance," good enough for me. How ye made that slip and printed "British Thermal Units" for the life of me I can't understand. We'll let it ride this time. How soon till we get a "Vic" story. That space talk you talk, keep it up. I can't write it but I ain't jealous like some other people are 'cause they can't write it. Keep up the good work, and TWS rates first with me.

I have been reading TWS for ten years, counting when it appeared under the title of WONDER STORIES. This is my first letter to any mag.—*Jomben, West Va.*

Your ethergram comes as a spot of dew in an arid desert. The old Sarge was beginning to feel as low as the nadir of Phobos—and that's pretty low, almost dragging the surface of Mars. I'll set a static trap for the author of BTU. I don't know how that Jerome guy got into this space ship, anyhow. He writes detective stories.

You've done nobly, Pee-lot Blevins, in reading TWS for ten years. Carry on another decade, and you'll rate one brass-bound jug of Xeno as first prize. But you'll have to fight me for it.

LONGER NOVELS, FINER PRINT

By Brice Paulsell

Dear Sarge: Have you been lending your Xeno jug to everyone connected with TWS? Or do they all have one of their own? Anyway, for some reason or another, the mag has lost plenty of quality since it went bi-monthly. Why not bring back the feature novel in reduced print again? I'm not asking you to go monthly, I'm just asking that you buy longer novels and put them in the back with reduced print.

And why not get some good artists now that we're reforming? Morey, Weaso, and Murphy are no good. Schomburg and Marchioni are whom you should want.

I can't argue about the short stories because, as a rule, they are all pretty good. You DO have good writers between your covers. Millard and Wellman are proof of that.

Another thing you need is a good cover artist. . . . I mean a good one, too. Bergy makes figures okay, but his colors clash and make the illustration too gaudy.

The feature story in the latest issue, "Thunder to Venus" was very good as inter-planetary yarns go. It goes without saying I enjoyed every word of it.

Say, Sarge, is it crickets to send a spacegram via your pages? It won't go very far . . . just to the readers of S-F in New Orleans and vicinity. This is the message:

Would like to get in touch with you if you are interested in forming a S-F Club in the city? Write me your name and address on a postal card.

Well, Sarge, do you think the message got through to some of your enthusiastic New Orleans readers?

I am closing this letter re-expressing my fervent hope that the feature novel be made longer and put in the back of TWS in reduced print soon. And so I remain: an ever-faithful reader of long standing—*2807 Bruxelles St., New Orleans, La.*

Everybody doesn't agree with you, Kiwi Paulsell. A lot of the junior astrogators are hollering for finer novels and longer print, if you'll let me re-shuffle your blurb. Honestly, the old space dog shudders at the idea of printing even Shakespeare in TWS. There isn't a literary classic in the language which some space ape wouldn't tear to shreds. But thanks for your good wishes. You may have an extra trick at the pilot panel.

AUGUST ISSUE PERFECT

By W. J. Mason

Dear Sarge: After reading the August issue of THRILLING WONDER STORIES I have decided that it is perfect. "Land of the Burning Sea" was one of the best stories I ever read.

Wasn't there a little mistake where you subtracted on page 86, in the article, "Rule of Math"?

I am waiting for that annual.

All the departments are good!—*Franklin, N. C.*

Are you getting picayunish on me, Pee-lot Mason? Yes, there was a little mistake on page 86, but not in subtraction. The printer got a little pi-type-eyed when he was setting that form and he transposed the digits of 4781 to read 4871. I'm sorry about that and I'll have the head proof-reader fired through the stern rockets next trip, but don't you give me the guff that you couldn't understand the problem and see what caused the error. The trick is still a good one for junior astrogators to practice after Sunday school.

AN I.Q. FOR THE READER SPEAKS

By Eric Winters

Dear Ed; Along about the end of 1939 or the beginning of 1940, when STF mags flooded the stands, I stopped reading this mag of yours and confined myself to one or two of the best. Recently I have been conducting a survey of all the STF mags in an effort to discover the best and so I came to purchase the June issue of your squalid fiction vehicle. After reading it I was suddenly bashed in the face by the knowledge that I liked the darn thing and consequently I find myself writing this ungrammatical epistle.

First off, let me congratulate you on publishing a real STF story, "False Dawn," by Kuttner, the best story in the issue. "Thunder to Venus" and "Asteroid Castaways" though old of plot, were startlingly human and well written. "Dames is Poison" rates next more because of Kuttner's fine writing than anything else. The other three stories were all enjoyable though not as good as the previous mentioned.

Your cover and illustrations all hit the spot with the exception of Morey's pic for "Last Disappearance."

With the exception of "Glory of the U. S. L." and perhaps "Thunder to Venus" all your stories seemed adult in nature. If this is true what excuse can you offer for such a child as your reader department. Who ever writes Sergeant Saturn must have the mind of a moronic six-year-old. As far as I can see he makes no sane comments on the letters at all, but just babbles on and on in supposedly futuristic baby talk. Why don't you forget Saturn and raise the readers' department to a par with the rest of the mag?—*Berkeley, Calif.*

Kiwi Winters, I don't think you've been

reading deep enough between the lines of my space prattle, or maybe repartee isn't your forte. The old Sarge tries not to be too subtle with you junior pee-lots, returning only like for like. What you have to do is read each letter carefully to get any sense out of what the old space dog says in reply. And sometimes there are carry-overs from last issue.

Sure, it's wacky, but what can you expect from loafers bred, a jug of Xeno and cow (beefs to you) in this wilderness? Paradise? And if you can't interpret this corn, go ask Omar to make you a zipper space suit out of a tent.

But, no fooling, pee-lot, the old Sarge is glad you're back in the fold. Don't stray off again.

ARE YOU LISTENIN', MISS RUNDLE?

By George Ebey

Greetings, Sarge: I'll try to make this reply as succinct as possible in response to your plea following the Rundle letter. Sorry, but you'll have to get somebody else to feud around in the Reader Speaks, though. Feuds have been abolished in fandom, you know. At least so I've heard.

Indeed, my kind heart bleeds for Miss Rundle. Obviously some of that loathsome Frisco fog has permeated her noodle, thus producing that dread disease "cover loss de poco." Or, as it is more commonly known: water on the brain.

Otherwise, how could she have written that I panned the covers. Tch, tch, Agnes. My letter started off with "I really enjoyed December's cover."

And that business of trimmed edges she complains about. Where, oh where, in my masticated missive can you find any mention of trimmed edges?

Yours truly can understand her liking for "Zarnak." Most females get those longings for muscular heroes complete with ray gat every now and then. If it isn't Buck Rogers, it's Tarzan or Flash Gordon. They yearn to be enfolded by manly arms and waltzed away in a rocket-ship, while the streets of St. Petersburg go mad with jealousy. The last is a quote from "The Man Who Came to Dinner"—'tain't original.

But let's abandon Agnes for something a trifle more interesting. The cover on the August ish, for example. Read on, please.

Repulsive, isn't it? I'm speaking of the hideous green background and the mirth-provoking "invaders" bounding merrily about in crystallized proton rings—flashed from Cap Future, no doubt—and squirting the foo-foo guns at some real wit's appropriate amount of thigh exposed. A very boring ensemble!

A few of the stories are fairly readable. My favorite was "Minnie of Mars." A tricky little bit of razzle-dazzle about nothing in particular that hit the mark with me. "Meteorite Mr. Myrtle" wasn't half bad except for the ancient plot. A rather clever ending. Carl Selwyn's story was about the most unsentimental balderdash I've ever seen! Tremendous plants and animals on a planet with the crushing gravity of Jupiter! The author got the symptoms of tularemia all wrong, by the way. He might also have mentioned that the disease is not always fatal. And those are just the most glaring errors.

Sorry, but the article looked too stuffy to wade through.

When do we see the last of Marchioni and Morey? What happened to the best artist you ever had? I'm speaking of Schomburg, who seems to have deserted TWS for good. Of course, Weso was a beat was superior to Schomburg—but Weso never is at his best anymore. A little Orban would provide a pleasant contrast to your customary battery of scratchers.

The Reader Speaks is more sprightly this

ish. Naturally you need more letters from Ebey. (Oh, naturally.) And what happened to Fortier? It's fun to see S. Saturn smack down the sweetly sarcastic laddies who write in to smack S. Saturn down.

Random Thoughts:

Ed Hamilton's novel looks good . . . ditto the prospective Carstairs' longie . . . when does the Story Behind the Story leave? . . . we want more Finlay (who doesn't?) . . . prospective poets might remit some of their poetry to me to go into Larry Smith's new poetry fanmag. If it doesn't click I'll see that it gets back to the author. Send it to my address at the end of this letter. And that's all for this trip. Hands off the Xeno, Sarge.—4766 Reinhardt Drive, Oakland, Calif.

Sol You're back, Kiwi Ebey! Maybe I punctuated that line wrong. Excuse me. So you're back, Kiwi Ebey. Take your choice. I don't know which looks better.

And you are quite right about feuds. But a little persiflage is permissible. You've been allowed your ration, so go away, please. Unless you have a special permit for canning.

One thing the old Sarge wants to say before reaching for another ethergram. In some of your letters there have been comments on the appearance of our flag on the cover. In case you didn't notice it, good Old Glory was on the cover of every magazine in the country July Fourth—and God bless her!

No, you space monkeys don't have to jump out of your skins and cheer and wave your toupees. Just dig down in the old sock and buy all the War Stamps and War Bonds you can possibly finance. That's the way to show your appreciation for freedom and democracy and stuff.

BLAME IT ON THE SARGE

By D. W. Boggs

Dear Sarge: The August cover of TWS made a hit with me, but only because of the replica of the American flag in the boxed-off portion. The Belarski painting itself was passable, but only that. Not since the December, 1941, issue has TWS boasted a thoroughly satisfying cover, and unless the cover policy is revised, it doesn't look as though we'll see another good one for a couple more years.

Incidentally, what's the idea of having the cover-scene duplicated by an inside pic? One just recovers from the shock of seeing the cover when he comes upon the duplicate of it inside. Disheartening!

Assigning Morey to do the illustrations for the feature novel was obviously a mistake. It makes one weep when he realizes what Virgil Finlay, Damon Knight, or Frank R. Paul could have done with the job. Finlay, by the way, contributes the only creditable pic in the issue—the one for "The Hunter of the King Planet." The drawing for "Satellite of Perseus" by Marchioni, I think, even though he was ashamed to sign his name—staggers up to win the booby prize. It's strange that Marchioni, who a scant dozen years ago could turn out work that would make Schneeman jealous, can do such abominable hack stuff today.

Ah yes, the stories: "Meteorite Mr. Myrtle" takes first place, beating out "Land of the Burning Sea" with ease. In this story, Arthur gives us one of his better humor tales. It was amusing without being grotesque, and Mr. Myrtle managed to transcend the stereotyped pattern from which he had been cast. (Gad, what literary phrasing!) Turk Dugan was pretty menacing; that paravian breed of villains is dependable. A w. puts I admit the plot was overworked, but with such pitiful opposition, even a competent formula yarn is welcome.

Because of its length, "Land of the Burn-

ing Sea" comes through to take second place. Malcolm Jameson says he got the idea for it during a visit with the Editor of TWS. Off-hand, I'd say he dropped in to see you, Sarge. The yarn was a Xeno-inspired nightmare, or I miss my guess.

Seriously, "Burning Sea" was just another variation of the enslaved-future-world-saved-singled-handedly-by-a-super-hero theme. Someday your authors will run out of ways to enslave the poor futuremen, and then what will happen to TWS and STARTLING? The last readable story built on that plot was Wellman's "Island in the Sky" in 1941.

"Satellite of Peril"—aside from the crummy title—is a fairly exciting and fairly credible story. A rather pleasing effect was gained by telling part of the tale from the heroine's viewpoint—an unusual twist, seldom seen in STF.

"Minnie of Mars" far surpassed the first of the series, "Glory of U. S. L." However, may I suggest that a series grows tiresome unless no more than two episodes appear in a year? Fairly good was "The Hunter of the King Planet" although it was unnecessarily long.

I see no excuse at all for "Private Brown's Blitzkrieg." You might say it was simp and puerile. By the way, why the title? Joe Brown was not yet a soldier when he "saved" New York.

Oh yea, I neglected to mention "Rule of Math," five pages of small print and an overabundance of cuts. Well, it wasn't at all bad, but the previous article, "Rule of Thumb," surpassed it. Let's have some more like this—2115 Benjamin Street, N. E., Minneapolis, Minnesota.

There you go, kiwi, asking about the flag and the reproduction of the cover painting on the inside. I just explained about Old Glory, and I explained in words of one syllable about the cover set-up a few rocket bursts back.

As for the Jameson novel, I'll swear I'm innocent. I was off on a special expedition to Pluto when Malcolm had that brain-storm. Anyway, it was a pretty good nightmare while it lasted. And you needn't jump on Private Joe Brown. He's had

three citations and a couple of AWOLs by now.

It was nice of you, pee-lot, to like the picture of the flag. Now climb back into the nut bin and see how quickly you can match yourself.

ERRATA AND COMMENTS

By Gilbert H. Jacobs

Dear Alleged Sarge: Hold on to your hat. With deep dismay I note that in our latest issue one reader, Miss Agnes Rundle, presumes to denounce those of us who dare criticize TWS for its usual varied collection of monthly errors. Frankly, Miss Rundle, I enjoy the chap's letters.

Please be advised, Miss Rundle, that I have studied some physics, and it is very annoying to see an elementary faux pas on the part of supposedly educated authors.

Now, if some author said that a beta ray was like high frequency X rays, I would only mildly point out that he meant the gamma ray. However, saying opposites repel, having space ships turn (see below), and other ridiculous notes really annoy me.

Now, apropos your (our?) latest issue. Mr. Arthur apparently has no respect for his characters! Mr. Myrtle would never get to Mars. Since he traveled in a straight line, the planet would not be there when he arrived. Alas! he would proceed to Lord knows where. (This goes even if he aimed for the plane.)

In "Minnie of Mars" a slight error—a space ship going from Earth to Mars would use its motors about 10 minutes (sa fact), and the expenditure of fuel for half an hour would be something. Where would it be put? Oh, well, how about sending all authors to science school?

If you would prove that you desire to better the mag, drop that silly "story behind the story."

"Satellite of Peril"—Long's still going strong.

"Private Brown's Blitzkrieg"—one more corny one like this and we'll all go on a blitzkrieg.

"The Hunter of the King Planet"—you should have banned it.

I have not finished the novel yet.

READ OUR COMPANION MAGAZINE FEATURING
YOUR FAVORITE SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS

STARTLING STORIES

Coming in the November Issue

THE DAY OF THE CLOUD

An Astounding Complete Book-Length Novel

By ROSS ROCKLYNNE

Plus Other Stories and Features

Now on Sale **15¢** at All Stands

By the way, Sarge, you tell Mr. King to argue out a point about velocity with me. Why? We both noted an error, so why should we argue?

By the way, Sarge, rocket ships cannot travel in straight lines, and cannot land on a planet with an atmosphere by dropping straight down. It would have to circle the planet twice (or more).

Then, again, Sarge, the motors would not be used in space. Also space ships cannot engage in warfare in space, inasmuch as they are unable to turn and zoom in all directions (fuel, pay)!

Sarge, by all means interject your amusing comments! In closing I would note that your covers can stand modification, to say the very least. Drop the word "Thrilling" from your title—884 East 15th Street, Brooklyn, New York.

Well, with a kick in the stern rockets like this the old Sarge figures he can cut all his fuel jets cold and still have enough momentum to circle Pluto and coast back to Earth. Sure, we'll circle Pluto, not twice, but at least three times—and pick up a shipment of Xeno.

There's no point in reopening an old discussion; it's like eating yesterday's cold pancakes. So we'll drop the technical errors of the past and look for some new holes to gnaw at. And speaking of holes, don't you space monkeys accept any knot-holes, unless they have nickels in them.

Now carry on the inspection of this issue's cargo and leave the old Sarge in peace.

—SERGEANT SATURN,

The Old Space Dog.



THIS SIGN HAS BEEN SCRAPPED!

If you are over 40, you know that this unwritten policy formerly faced you in many cases. Youth was preferred.

But not now.

War has placed a premium on you. You have advantages to offer an employer. You can get jobs—you can win promotion with your present employer. Today is your day to build yourself into greater responsibility and larger pay—for both war and post-war times.

You need, perhaps, only a little more specialized ability—a little more knowledge for the better job. And we can help you—that has been our business for 34 years.

Ask about our training in the field of your choice. The information is free and it may help insure your success and happiness now and when peace comes.

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY A Correspondence Institution

Dept. 10329-R Chicago

I want to know whether—and how—you can help me to more ability and success. Please send me—without obligation—your free 48-page booklet on the business field checked below.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foremanship | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Law, LL.B. Degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salesmanship | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Correspondence |

Name.....Age.....

Address.....

Present Position.....

**You give to
someone you know
when you give
to USO**

EYE-GLASSES as LOW as **\$2.95** Complete



Try **by MAIL** Now **SEND NO MONEY!** (TEST YOUR OWN EYES AT HOME WITH OUR NEW 16 DAY TRIAL)

16 DAYS' MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE of SATISFACTION
If you're not 100% satisfied with glasses we make we'll refund every cent you pay us. **FREE** Trial Offer. Write TODAY for FREE catalog, scientific test chart. Mr. Service 1 U.S. EYE-GLASSES CO., 1557 Milwaukee Ave., Dept. A-82 Chicago, Ill.



OLD LEG TROUBLE

Easy to use Viscose Method heals many old leg sores caused by leg congestion, varicose veins, swollen legs and injuries or an cast for TRIAL. Describe your trouble and get FREE BOOK.

T. S. VISCOSI METHOD COMPANY
140 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois

CASH for UNUSED POSTAGE

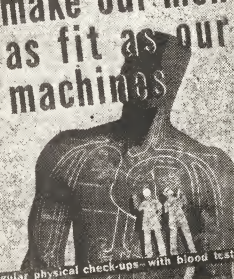
U. S. Stamps wanted at 90% of Face Value. Money Order sent on receipt. Send Stamps Registered Mail.
UNITED, Dept. T, 101 W. 41st St., N. Y. C.



\$7.95 60 DAYS TRIAL **FALSE TEETH**
AS LOW AS **\$7.95**
Per Plate. DENTAL PLATES are made in our own laboratory from your personal impression. Our workmanship and material

GUARANTEED or purchase price refunded. We take this risk on our 60-day trial offer. **DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY!** MAIL POST CARD for FREE Material and Catalog of our LOW PRICES. DON'T PUT IT OFF - Write us TODAY!
BRIGHTON-THOMAS DENTAL LABORATORY
Dept. 1295 6217 S. Halsted Street, Chicago, Illinois

make our men as fit as our machines



regular physical check-ups - with blood tests

MAIL TODAY to your State or local health department for free literature about SYPHILIS and GONORRHEA—their cause, spread, and CURE!

Name.....
Address.....
City..... State.....

THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY

IF you don't know it, Edmond Hamilton is a busy man, what with preparing for army life, writing Captain Future novels, and doing other works of fiction. Nevertheless, Ed found enough time to do a novel for **THRILLING WONDER STORIES** which you find in this issue.

Ed Hamilton was in New York a couple of weeks ago to have a confab on his next yarn, and this is what he said about the



genesis of THROUGH INVISIBLE BARRIERS:

Through Invisible Barriers is a story that resulted from the rebellious attitude of its own chief character.

Let me explain. Some months ago, I first read of the startling new theory of contraterrene matter. It had been proposed by at least four physicists of international renown. Their suggestion was that "inside out" atoms might exist. Atoms, that is, whose nucleus would be negative instead of positive, and which would have an outer shell of positrons instead of negative electrons. This hypothetical "reversed" matter they gave the name of contraterrene matter.

That sounded fascinating to me. More so, when I read that Doctor Vladimir Rojansky, of Union College, has suggested in the *Astro-physical Journal* that some of the comets in our skies might be of contraterrene matter. There might even be stars and worlds that were contraterrene.

Here, I told myself, is an idea for a real rip-snorting new scientific story. Enthusiastically, I started to work on it. First, I asked myself what would be the effect if a piece of real matter and a piece of contraterrene matter were brought together.

Well, there were several possibilities that had suggested themselves on that point. The one that seemed most logical and most interesting to me was the idea that, because there would be no repulsion of the electronic shells, a contraterrene atom and a real atom

Entertainment on Every Page of
**BEST CROSSWORD
PUZZLES**
THE BIG QUARTER'S WORTH
AT ALL NEWSSTANDS

would simply pass through one another. Therefore, I decided upon that as the basis for the story.

I was already glowingly planning some vast dramatic scenes involving a whole contraterrene world. Boy, I told myself, this will knock the readers right out of their chairs. I'll give 'em some of the most gripping new adventure scenes they've ever read.

But first, before the story could swing into big drama, it had to have an explanation and a beginning. My chief character was going to be a physicist—nobody else would logically be experimenting with contraterrene matter. My physicist must achieve the experimental creation of contraterrene matter, to get things rolling. Then we'd get going into the vast drama of the thing. I could hardly wait.

So I started the story. I'd decided to tell it in the first person, from the point of view of my scientist-hero. I began right off, therefore, with Doctor Withers, my physicist. I began with his triumphant achievement of the creation of contraterrene matter.

But Doctor Withers, as I wrote his story in his own words, began to give me a little trouble. He wanted to make some simple tests upon this new contraterrene matter he had created. Well, that was all right, that was the logical thing for a scientist to do. So I let him go ahead and make the tests, meanwhile impatient to get on with the dramatic things to come.

Unfortunately, my physicist's simple experiments with contraterrene matter immediately got him into trouble. That was logical enough, yes. But it wasn't what I wanted. The stuff didn't have any place in the epic tale I'd planned.

So I heaved some pages into the wastebasket and began again. But again, every way I thought up for Doctor Withers to test his discovery messed things all up for him. He got himself right into a jam. And it was such an interesting jam that I sort of forgot my epic for the time being and pounded along to see just how he was going to get out of it.

[Turn page]

HE HAS A JOB ON HIS HANDS



This Space Contributed to
ARMY EMERGENCY RELIEF

How do you KNOW you can't WRITE?

Had Never Written a Line—
Sells Article Before Completing
Course

"Before completing the N.I.A. course, I sold a feature to Screenland Magazine for \$50. That resulted in an immediate assignment to do another for the same magazine. After gaining confidence with successive feature stories, I am now working into the fiction field. Previous to enrolling in the N.I.A. I had never written a line for publication, nor seriously expected to do so."

—GLEN R. LEVANT

116 West Ave. 26, Los Angeles, Cal.



Learn to write by writing

NEWSPAPER Institute training is based on the New York Copy Desk Method. It starts and keeps you writing in your own home, on your own time. Week by week you receive actual assignments, just as if you were right at work on a great metropolitan daily. Your writing is individually corrected and constructively criticized by veteran writers. You will find that (instead of vainly trying to copy someone else's writing tricks) you are rapidly developing your own distinctive, self-flavored style—undergoing an experience that has a thrill to it and which at the same time develops in you the power to make your feelings articulate.

Many people who should be writing become awe-struck by fabulous stories about millionaire authors and give little thought to the \$25, \$50 and \$100 or more that can often be earned for material that takes little time to write—stories, articles on business, hobbies, travels, sports, recipes, war work, civilian defense, etc.—things that can easily be turned out in leisure hours, and often on the impulse of the moment.

Let us help you test your native abilities. Our interesting Writing Aptitude Test will do it. It's free—entirely without obligation. Send the coupon today. Newspaper Institute of America, One Park Avenue, New York. (Founded 1925)

WAR MAKES WRITERS

Every war has launched or marked the turning point in the careers of innumerable great authors, such as Laurence Stallard, Willie Cathers, Ernest Hemingway, Edna Ferber, Irvin S. Cobb, Frankie Hurst. This war may be YOUR golden opportunity to express YOURSELF! Send TODAY for your N.I.A. Writing Aptitude Test. Special terms and privileges for U. S. Service Men.

HAVE you ever tried? Have you ever attempted even the least bit of training, under competent guidance?

Or have you been sitting back, as it is so easy to do, waiting for the day to come when you will awaken all of a sudden to the discovery "I am a writer"?

If the latter course is the one of your choosing, you probably never will write. Lawyers must be law clerks. Engineers must be draftermen. We all know that, in our times, the egg does come before the chicken.

It is seldom that anyone becomes a writer until he (or she) has been writing for some time. That is why so many authors and writers spring up out of the newspaper business. The day-to-day necessity of writing—of gathering material about which to write—develops their talent, their insight, their background and their confidence as nothing else could.

That is why the Newspaper Institute of America bases its writing instruction on journalism—continuous writing—the training that has produced so many successful authors.

NEWSPAPER INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

One Park Avenue, New York

Send me, without cost or obligation, your Writing Aptitude Test and further information about writing for profit.

Mrs. }
Miss }
Address _____

(All correspondence confidential. No salesman will call on you.) 948368

FALSE TEETH

90 DAY TRIAL
MONEY BACK GUARANTEE OF
SATISFACTION protects you.

SEND NO MONEY

J. B. CLEVELAND DENTAL PLATE CO.
DEPT. 2-P2 EAST ST. LOUIS, ILLINOIS

5th YEAR

Buy where thousands have
been satisfied. We make
FALSE TEETH for you from
your own impressions.



LOW
AS
7.95

Write Today for Free
Booklet and Material

SONG POEMS WANTED

to be set to music. Photocograph records made. Send your poems
for our offer and FREE Rhyming Dictionary. Vanderbilt
Music Studios, Dept. D.O., Box 112, Coney Island, N. Y.

PICTURE RING 48



Special Picture Ring—made from any photo.
Example Ringing also. Send No Money! Mail photo with
snapping strip for ring size. Pay postman only for plus postage.
Hand dated literature. Photo returned. Make order of
your ring—size 48. Never back order. Order
now. PICTURE RING CO., Dept. 728 Cincinnati, O.

LODESTONE

LIVE AND STRONG

7 Keys to Power, \$1. Postage extra if C.O.D. Charms.
Powders. Oils. Herbs. Novelties, etc., described in
FREE Catalog.
D. SMYTHE CO. Box T, NEWARK, MO.

SPECIAL WORK FOR MARRIED WOMEN

Earn up to \$23.00 weekly and your own dresses
Free. No canvassing, no investment. Full or
part time. Write fully, giving age, dress size.
FASHION FROCKS, Inc., Dept. 44042, Cincinnati, O.

Get into the BAKING BUSINESS

Bakes make good money! Now 7th Industry in wages!
Nearly depression-proof. New home study Baking Course
qualifies you. Common school education sufficient. If you're
ambitious, write for FREE BOOK, "Opportunities in Baking."
National Baking Institute, 1318 Michigan, Dept. 1807, Chicago



PILES

Let us tell you of a mild, painless,
low cost home treatment perfected by
Dr. O. A. Johnson, for 26 years head
physician of one of America's Finest Rec-
tal Clinics where thousands of cases have
been successfully treated. Write today for Free
Trial Offer. No obligation. Address JOHNSON
RECTAL CLINIC, Desk 976, Kansas City, Missouri

Why Fistula Is Dangerous Ailment

Any person suffering from Fistula, Rectal
Abscess, Piles or any other rectal or colon dis-
order—may obtain a new 40-page FREE
BOOK on these and associated chronic ail-
ments. The book is illustrated with X-Ray
pictures, charts and diagrams for easy read-
ing. Also describes latest mild institutional
treatments. Write today—a card will do—to
Thornton & Minor Clinic, Suite 1056, 926
McGee Street, Kansas City, Missouri.

I woke up suddenly to realize that I had
half the story done—and that it wasn't the
story I'd planned at all. But by then I was so
interested myself in the Doc's troubles that I
stuck with him.

So I finally emerged with a totally different
story than I'd intended. I hope you like it.
But if you don't, blame the Doc—not me. He's
responsible for it.

—Edmond Hamilton.

JESSIFER RIDES AGAIN

YOU know, after reading what Ed wrote
about Dr. Withers being such a head-
strong character that he forced the story
along his own selected channels, we are
wondering if Nelson S. Bond didn't have
something of the same kind of trouble in
getting Jessifer pinned down on paper.
Anyway, here is what he writes us about
his rollicking robot—Jessifer:

It is high time some halfway honest soul
called a halt to the pretentious affectation
that has of late swept pandemic through the
ranks of those gentry who give you—the
readers—the main bulk of your science-fiction!

With increasing persistency these writers
have assumed unto themselves the mantle of
prophetic vision. Forgotten is the obvious
truth that their stories of the world of the
future are, at best, but hazards. So imbued
are they with their own sense of revelation
that they have lost all logic and reason; they
people the future-world with beings "of a
name that never was," incredible creatures
behaving most incredibly!

This, readers of science-fiction, is your own
fault! You are the finest audience for which
a writer can write. You are the most ardent,
the most faithful, and the most flattering.
You write your opinions to the magazines;
the magazines print solid pages of your let-
ters—a phenomenon unparalleled in any other
field of fiction. You have, therefore, innocently
and unwittingly invested your favorite
authors in a Shirt of Nessus . . . a cloak of
omniscience which at once conceals and de-
stroys. Drunk with the sense of self-importance
you have given them, the science-fiction-
theaters have gone hog-wild!

A writer creates so glib a world of the
future that it, and only it, is granted possi-
bility. Another heroes a robot who far out-
does anything for which Mankind would ever
wish to create mechanical servants; he be-
comes, in effect, a plate-armored superman
whose pistoned heart churns with emotion,
whose sponge-iridium brain palpitates with
love of his flesh-and-blood brothers. It might
be noted here, parenthetically, that "sponge-
iridium" is one of the least stable of all forms
of matter; it fuses easily and has a tendency



YOU, Too,
CAN SINK U-BOATS

BUY
United States War Savings Bonds & Stamps

to break down under even such slight changes as a rise in temperature or a volt of electricity. Perhaps this will explain to you the completely irrational actions of a certain fictional robot known to all fans.

Anyhow, a reaction against all this nonsense has struck me. JESSIFER RIDES AGAIN pretends to be no epic, no "classic" (O, loosely granted word of praise), no grim story of a grimmer, inevitable future. It is a tale written solely to amuse, a story which might happen. But its central character is logical, at any rate. He is a robot who was built to be a robot, who acts like a robot, who serves only the functions of a robot. He does not love the girl, nor win her in the end. Aw, the heck with it! Read the story!

—Nelson S. Bond.

Which just about covers the subject. The inside info on Wilm Carver and his first story you will find along with Wilm's photo adjacent to his yarn.

—THE EDITOR.

Follow the World's Greatest Space-farer



IN

PLANETS IN PERIL

*A Complete Book-Length
Novel of the Futuremen*

By EDMOND HAMILTON

Featured in the Fall Issue
of Our Companion Magazine

CAPTAIN FUTURE

NOW ON SALE **15c** AT ALL STANDS

WORLD'S LARGEST DENTAL MAKERS Now
FALSE TEETH **by Mail**
On 60 Days' Trial! **\$7.95**
from Our Laboratory Direct to You!
Dental Plates made to measure—Individual—by MAIL.
Take over an impression at home. Over 100,000 men & women wear teeth we make.
MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE!
SEND NO MONEY!
FREE Impression Material, Information, Catalog, Low Prices.
UNITED STATES DENTAL CO.
1553 MILWAUKEE AVE., DEPT. A-62, CHICAGO, ILL.

High School Course at Home Many Finish in 2 Years

Go as rapidly as your time and abilities permit. Course equivalent to resident school work—prepares for college entrance exams. Standard H. S. texts supplied. Diploma. Credit for H. S. subjects already completed. Single subjects if desired. High school education is very important for advancement in business and industry and socially. Don't be handicapped all your life. Be a High School graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation.
American School, Dept. H758, Drexel at 58th, Chicago

SUPER JU JITSU

Get Tough Quick!



For personal defense and counter-attack . . . no system is more powerful! Almost unbelievably efficient. You don't need big muscles. Lack brute twice your size with only your bare hands, even if they are armed. Get ready now for any emergency—protect your loved ones. This amazing new self-study course teaches you double-quick. Startling low price. Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back. **FREE DETAILS.** Write today sure . . . time is short.

NELSON CO., 500 SHERMAN, DEPT. K-511, CHICAGO



U.S. GOVERNMENT JOBS

START
\$1260 to \$2100 YEAR

Hundreds War
Appointments being
made.

Get one for
yourself.
32-Page
Civil Service
Book.
Mail Coupon
Today—
SURE.

Franklin Institute
Dept. N-256
Rochester, N. Y.

Gentlemen: Rush to me
FREE of charge, list of
U. S. Government big pay
jobs. Send me **FREE** 32-
page book describing sala-
ries, vacations, hours and
work. Tell me how to qualify
for one of these jobs.

Name

Address



EYE GLASSES BY MAIL

GLASSES
as LOW as
\$1.95 PAIR



16 DAYS TRIAL

Choice of the LATEST STYLES—remarkably LOW PRICES. SATISFACTION GUARANTEED or your money back. If you are not satisfied—they will not cost you a cent.

SEND NO MONEY Write for FREE catalog today showing all of our many styles and LOW PRICES.

ADVANCE SPECTACLE CO.

537 S. Dearborn St. Dept. T-10 Chicago, Ill.

BROKEN GLASSES
REPAIRED
AT LOW COST

ROLLS DEVELOPED

Two 5x7 Double Weight Professional Enlargements, 25¢
8 Gloss Deckle Edge Prints. COIN

CLUB PHOTO SERVICE, Dept. 15, LaCrosse, Wis.

(SIDELINE Salesmen and Agents)

Sell our Illustrated Comic Booklet, and other novelties. Each booklet size 4 1/2 by 3 1/2. Ten different sample booklets sent for 50¢ or 25¢ as ordered for \$1.00. Shipped prepaid. Wholesale novelty price list sent with order only. No C.O.D. orders. Send Cash or Stamp. Print name and address.
REPSAC SALES CO., 1 West 13th St., Dept. 4410, New York City
FOR YOUR SURPLUS CASH—UNUSED U. S. STAMPS
Mail Order Dealers: Collectors: We buy accumulations and surplus UNUSED U. S. Postage Stamps at 90% face value for denominations 1/2¢ to 10¢, 85% face value for denominations 20¢ to 50¢. Small lots 85%. MAIL STAMPS REGISTERED. Money sent by return mail.
GARDNER SERVICE, 72 Fifth Ave., Dept. 4410, New York City



DICE. CARDS.

Specialties for Magicians use. Inks, Shimmers, Check-Cop, Dabbs. Catalog ten cents, stamps or coin.
HILL BROS., Box T, Salida, Colo.

Powerful Vision — 8 Mile Range

BINOCULARS

20 Days Free Trial \$4.75
Postpaid or C.O.D.

Scientifically ground, powerful lens that give clear vision equal to 110 yds. at 1000 yds. distance! Adjustable for all distances and eye widths. Binoculars come with handsome case and straps. GUARANTEED.

If not satisfied after 20 days free trial money refunded. American Binocular Co., 7750 S. Halsted, Dept. F-255, Chicago.

MAKE \$10 CASH

Easy Money for Christmas! You make \$10 cash on every 21-card Leader Christmas Assortment you sell at \$1.00. Only 20 boxes pay you \$10.00 cash. Also take fast orders for \$10.00 51 Home-Imprinted UNIMAGED Christmas Greeting Cards. Gorgeous eye-catching designs. Amazing values never shown before! 11 other popular assortments—Oil-Blot, Religious, Gift Wraps, etc. Also \$1 Personal Stationery (no experience needed). Start earning now. Write for samples on approval.
ARTISTIC CARD CO., 342 W. Elmira, N.Y.

Only 20 Boxes
of Gorgeous
CHRISTMAS
CARDS
MAKE
EVEN MORE
—JUST IN
SPARE TIME

USED Correspondence Courses

Complete home-study courses and educational books, slightly used, sold, rented, exchanged. All subjects. Money-back guarantee. Cash paid for used courses. Full details and illustrated 76-page bargain catalog FREE. Write today!
508 Sherman, Dept. K-227, Chicago

ANY PHOTO ENLARGED

Size 3 x 5 inches or smaller if desired. Same price for full length or bust form, groups, landscapes, pet animals, etc., or enlargements of any photo of group picture. Safe return of original photo guaranteed.

SEND NO MONEY Just mail photo or snapshot (any size)

and within a week you will receive your beautiful enlargement, guaranteed fadeless. Two postpaid 5¢ or send 10¢ with order and we pay postage. 11 1/2 x 20-inch enlargement sent C.O.D. for \$4.95. Send 10¢ and we pay postage. Take advantage of this amazing offer or new. Send your photos today. Promptly sent wanted.
STANDARD ART STUDIOS, 113 S. Jefferson St., Dept. 402M, Chicago

47¢
3 for \$1.00



LOOKING FORWARD

(Concluded from page 103)

The only condition we impose is that you have never before sold a story for publication.

The prize? Payment for your story at the regular rates paid our professional scientific authors. The competition? Only yourself. There is no limit to the number of winners. In fact, we'd like to see a full score of them before snow flies again in this latitude, or whatever that gray-white stuff is that makes slush beneath our number ten rubbers (or whatever will be the synthetic overshoe the coming season).

OUR COMPANION MAGS

BEFORE we turn you birds over to the tender mercies of Sarge Saturn who rides herd in the astrologation chamber of the old ship TWS, let us remind you to read the current issues of our companion science fiction magazines—CAPTAIN FUTURE and STARTLING STORIES—for the best in imaginative fiction that is written today.

And before you start saving up passage money for that trip to the Moon, don't forget to load up with all the War Stamps and War Bonds you can possibly buy. Freedom, liberty and democracy come first. And don't let any crackpot try to tell you different. A little good old-fashioned flag-waving and Fourth of July orating is what we need—ALL THE TIME! Add a little milk of human kindness, and you've got as fine a Victory Cocktail as ever Saturn found in his Xeno jug.

That's all for now, folks. Close and seal ports for a stellar cruise.

—THE EDITOR.

IS THE DEATH RAY HERE?

It is, according to Author J. E. Powell, who tells you about it in a fascinating special feature

COMING
IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Power Without Horses

Uncle Sam Is Going All-Out on Gliders—Men Needed!

THE United States Army is now going all-out on gliders. The deadly technique of landing companies, regiments and even full divisions of men silently from the sky which the Germans used so successfully in Crete last year is to be turned against them when the great invasion of Europe finally gets under way.

The advantages of glider attack are obvious—the ships are economical to build and easy to replace—the element of surprise is immense, for no detector can pick up the approach of a motorless plane and gliders can be released from a towing ship while miles away from their objective and still hit it on the nose.

What is needed are men—for a man's job.

As this force—exact numbers, naturally cannot be given—is planned to number about a hundred thousand men, the field is wide open. Here are the qualifications for membership:

The applicant must be a citizen of the United States between the ages of 18 and 35 years, inclusive. He must be able to pass the physical and mental requirements. Formerly, prior flight training was considered essential, but these restrictions have been removed in order to give everyone a chance to qualify as a glider-pilot, regardless of the extent of previous experience.

He must be in reasonably good condition—though the bars are a bit lower than for the regular Air Forces—reasonably well educated and intelligent and must be up to general Army requirements. He will be given training, first at a CAA school on light planes with emphasis on dead stick landings, then get down to intensive training with gliders themselves.

Those who graduate successfully, be they civilians or Army men, will be given at least staff sergeant's rating with full flight pay. And, as it is a new service, commissions are going to come more easily than in other services at least until officer ranks are filled.

As we just said, it's a man's job and a great privilege—a chance to get in the first whacks at the Axis—and the rewards are great. Let's go, fellows. Keep 'em gliding!



FOR VICTORY
Buy
UNITED STATES WAR
BONDS • STAMPS

DRAFTSMEN NEEDED NOW



Industry is clamoring for more draftsmen, for the job can't start until plans are drawn. Buildings, airplanes, machines, guns, tanks, bridges, all start on the drafting board, so it's no wonder that every good draftsman has a fine job. Yes, more draftsmen are needed NOW. The pay is good and the opportunities for advancement great.

Learn at Home in Spare Time

Begin now to turn spare hours into money. Be a draftsman, the connecting link between a mechanic and an engineer. Enjoy the wonderful opportunities for promotion that exist now. No experience or artistic talent is needed. You don't have to leave your present job while learning. Use spare time.

Employment Service Included

Students who take our home study drafting course are entitled to our employment service without extra charge. We are in constant touch with many great firms needing men, and in times like these industry welcomes applications from American School advanced students and graduates.

The total tuition cost is low and the monthly payments are easy. Write today for free bulletin outlining our instruction and giving you the details of our selective employment service. No obligation of any kind. Write today.

AMERICAN SCHOOL

Drexel Avenue at 58th St. Dept. DD-758 Chicago

FALSE TEETH

LOW AS
\$7.00

90-DAY TRIAL
GUARANTEE!
CATALOG-FOLDER FREE



Try Brookfield plates—made under supervision of licensed dentist. Priced to fit your pocketbook ON MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE. Write today SEND NO MONEY for FREE Impression Material, and Information.

BROOKFIELD DENTAL PLATE CO.
Dept. 35-L2 Brookfield, Mo.

SONG POEMS WANTED TO BE SET TO MUSIC

Publishers need new songs! Submit one or more of your best poems for immediate consideration. Any subject. Send poem. PHONOGRAPH RECORDS MADE.

FIVE STAR MUSIC MASTERS, 611 Beacon Bldg., Boston, Mass.

FREE! FAMOUS BLUE BOOK CATALOG



DICE • CARDS

Perfect Dice, Magic Dice, Magic Cards—READ THE BACKS—Inks, Deubs, Poker Chips, Gaming Layouts, Dice Boxes, Counter Games, Patchboards. WRITE FOR CATALOG TODAY.

K. C. CARD CO.

1223 W. Washington Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

EASY WAY....

Tints Hair JET BLACK

This remarkable CAKE Shampoo, TINTZ Jet Black Shampoo, washes out dirt, loose dandruff, grease, grime and safely gives hair a real smooth JET BLACK TINT that fairly glows with life and lustre. Don't put up with faded hair, dull color hair a minute longer. TINTZ Jet Black Cake works gradual... each shampoo leaves your hair blacker, levellier, softer, easier to manage. No dyed look. Won't hurt permanents. Full color (3 for \$1). TINTZ comes in Jet Black, light, medium and dark Brown, Tintex, and Blonde. Order today! State shade wanted.

SEND NO MONEY Just pay postman plus postage on our positive assurance of satisfaction in 7 days or your money back. (We Pay Postage if remittance comes with order.) Don't wait - Write today to TINTZ COMPANY, Dept. 701, 207 N. MICHIGAN, CHICAGO Canadian Office, Dept. 701, 22 College St., Toronto



SONG POEM WRITERS

Write today for free booklet outlining profit sharing plan. ALLIED MUSIC Dept. 52, 204 E. 4th St., Cincinnati, O.



HOLLYWOOD ENLARGEMENT OF ANY PHOTO

Just to get acquainted, we will make a FREE PROFESSIONAL Hollywood Enlargement of any snapshot, photo, Kodak picture, print or negative to 4x7 inch size. Includes color of eyes, hair and clothing for \$1.00. Send us a life-size color enlargement in a FREE FRAME. Original returned with the enlargement. See for return mailing instructions. Order now. Offer good only in U.S.A. HOLLYWOOD FILM STUDIOS 7021 Santa Monica Blvd., Dept. 440, Hollywood, Calif.

Protect Entire Family for \$1 a Month

Certificates Paying Benefits up to \$1,000.00. Sent for FREE Inspection. **FREE** Covers accidental or natural death. No medical examination. Age limits 2 to 75 years. **SEND NO MONEY**—Just your name and address. No obligation. No salesman will call. Postcard will do. Atlas Mutual Benefit Ass'n, Dept. 19-K5, Wilmington, Delaware.

SONG & POEM WRITERS

NEW SONGWRITERS in great demand. Send us your Poems. We set them to music FREE. Hear your song on a record. Send for FREE Folder today.

CINEMA SONG CO., P.O. Box 2828, Dept. B-5, Hollywood, Calif.



THE ORIGINAL BLUE BOOK



Get this Big, Complete 72 page Original Blue Book. Contains mystifying novelties, magicless and conjurers specialities—DICE-CARDS-GAMES, Ink, Legends, etc. Supplies of all kinds. Write today!

H. C. EVANS & CO.

Dept. 15-K • 1520 W. ADAMS STREET • CHICAGO

730 SHAVES FROM 1 BLADE

AMAZING NEW BLADE SHARPENER



New sharpener for all makes of double-edge razor blades performs miracle! "Not necessary to change blades," writes one user. Another says, "Have used 1 blade over 730 times." RAZOROLL really sharpens blades because it strokes on leather. Gives keen, smooth shaving edges. No guess-work. Blade held at correct angle and proper pressure—automatically. Just turn crank to sharpen blade. No gears. Well made. Handsome—compact—in attractive case. Weighs few ounces. Will last years. Makes ideal gift.



SEND NO MONEY! Write today. Pay postman only \$1.00 plus five cents postage. Use Razoroll for 5 days and if you're not delighted with smooth, velvet shaves you get, return RAZOROLL and we'll return your dollar. Hurry—order today.

RAZOROLL CO., 620 N. Michigan, Dept. 2010, Chicago, Ill.

DOUBLE OR NOTHING

(Concluded from page 113)

Mayda's eyes were shining and bright.

"Why, that would pay off Mallow's mortgage! Oh, Dad—"

"Whose jewels are they?" Dr. Petrie asked. "Did Scarface say?"

"Sure." I nodded, grinning. "He robbed them from a home on Starshine Boulevard, back at Ceres. Some rich lady's hardware. Mallow, I think, was the name. Mrs. Carl Mallow."

I took off the belt. I'd had enough of it. I'd stay single from now on, as far as the belt went.

"Taxi, lady?" I said to Mayda.

She came along for a ride and she hasn't left yet.

*Your Favorite Authors
Are Featured in Our
Companion Science
Fiction Magazines!*



STARTLING STORIES and

CAPTAIN FUTURE

Each 15¢ At All Stands

THE HAZING

(Concluded from page 97)

"Sweeney," he howled, "you tell that damned monkey-tailed chief that in just about one second, I'm going to get sore and pull the whole sky down over his head. Get tough!"

BUT the chief did not wait for the message. He gestured defiance and the natives made a united rush. Tubal roared, and his muscles cracked against the bonds. The weld-gun in Williams' hand flared into life, its feeble power beaming outward.

The nearest native hut went up in sudden flames. Another followed—and another—and the fourth—and then the weld-gun went dead.

But it was enough. Not a native remained standing. All were groveling on their faces, wailing and shrieking for pardon. The chief wailed and shrieked loudest of all.

"Tell the chief," said Williams to Sweeney, "that that's just a little, insignificant sample of what we're thinking of doing to him!"

To the Humanoids, as he cut the rawhide holding them, he added complacently,

"Just some simple, ordinary savage psychology."

It was only after they were back in their ship and off in space again that Forase locked up his pride.

"But I thought Earthmen had never developed mathematical psychology! How did you know all that sub-Humanoid stuff? No one in the Galaxy has got that far yet!"

"Well," Williams grinned, "we have a certain amount of rule-of-thumb knowledge about the workings of the uncivilized mind. You see—we come from a world where most people, in a manner of speaking, are still uncivilized. So we have to know!"

Forase nodded slowly. "You screwball Earthmen! At least, this little episode has taught us all one thing."

"What's that?"

"Never," said Forase, dipping a second time into Earth slang, "get tough with a bunch of nuts. They may be nuttier than you think!"

BEWARE! LOOSE TALK CAN COST LIVES!

Getting Up Nights Makes Many Feel Old

Do you feel older than you are or suffer from Getting Up Nights, Backache, Nervousness, Leg Pains, Dizziness, Swollen Ankles, Rheumatic Pains, Burning, scanty or frequent passages? If so, remember that your Kidneys are vital to your health and that these symptoms may be due to non-organic and non-systematic Kidney and Bladder troubles—in such cases Cystex (a physician's prescription) usually gives prompt and joyous relief by helping the Kidneys flush out poisonous excess acids and wastes. You have everything to gain and nothing to lose in trying Cystex. An Iron-clad guarantee assures a refund of your money on return of empty package unless fully satisfied. Don't delay. Get Cystex (Siss-tex) from your druggist today. Only 35c.

Cystex
Helps Flush Kidneys

FALSE TEETH



Save money by ordering beautiful life-like MARVEL plates, by mail. Send for illustrated folder showing many styles, including popular transparent. FREE impression material sent with instructions on taking your own mouth impression. Write Today.

AS LOW AS \$7.95 PER PLATE

90 Days' Trial

MARVEL DENTAL COMPANY
Dept. 59-0, 343 S. Dearborn St., Chicago

DO YOU WANT TO STOP TOBACCO?

Handle the craving for tobacco as thousands have. Make yourself free and happy with Tobacco Reducers. Not a substitute, not habit forming. Write for free booklet telling of injurious effect of tobacco and of a treatment which has relieved many men.

FREE BOOK

THE NEWELL COMPANY
193 Clayton St., St. Louis, Mo.

POEMS WANTED

For Musical Setting
Mother, Home, Love, Sacred, Patriotic, Comic or any subject. Don't Delay—Send us your Original Poem at once—for immediate consideration and **FREE** Rhyming Dictionary.

RICHARD BROTHERS 74 WOODS BUILDING
CHICAGO, ILL.

COLON TROUBLES

Causes — Effects — Treatment

Colon troubles and Piles rate with bad teeth and tonsils as a fruitful cause of other ailments. Learn facts from 122-page **FREE BOOK** with charts and X-ray pictures. A card will do. McCleary Clinic, H-1097 Elms Blvd., Excelsior Springs, Mo.

A BLITZKRIEG for MILITARY STYLE OXFORD

SALES AND PROFITS

Unseasonal, soft as glove leather Military Style Oxford selling like wildfire. Making tremendous profits for Victor salesmen. This is one of over 250 specialty shoe styles for dress, sport, work, including new Rubber and Air Cushion Insole Shoes for men and women. Prices low as \$2.95. Biggest commission. Write today for **FREE** Outfit of Actual Sample Shoes. Reserve your territory. **ACT NOW.**

FREE SALES KIT

VICTOR THOMAS SHOE CO.
610 W. VAN BUREN ST., DEPT. V-21, CHICAGO, ILL.

Now! Learn music in just 30 MINUTES A DAY!

See how easy it is!

MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE
SWEET LAND OF LIBERTY



Look at the diagram. The first note on the music is "C." Follow the dotted line to the keyboard and locate "C" on the piano. Find the other notes the same way. Now strike the notes as indicated and you'll be playing the melody of that famous patriotic hymn, "America." Easy as A-B-C, isn't it?



Thousands have learned to play their favorite instrument this amazingly quick, easy way—YOU CAN, TOO!

Yes, thousands have learned to play quickly and easily this remarkable Print and Picture way. And if you follow the instructions . . . and give only a half hour of your spare time each day . . . you, too, should be able to play simple melodies sooner than you ever dreamed possible.

That's why it's such fun learning music this modern, U. S. School way. With this quick, easy method you need no special talent or previous musical training. Nor do you need to spend endless hours on humdrum scales and exercises. You learn to play real tunes almost from the start. And you can't go wrong. First you are told how to do a thing by simple printed instructions. Then a picture shows you how to do it. Finally, you do it yourself and hear how it sounds. Nothing could be clearer.

And just think! You can now take lessons on any instrument you select, for less than 7¢ a day! That includes everything . . . valuable sheet music, printed instructions, diagrams and pictures, and our Personal Advisory Service. No wonder thousands have taken advantage of this modern way to learn music . . . and to win new friends, and greater popularity! U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC, 28410 Brunswick Bldg., N. Y. C.

YOU NEED MUSIC TO RELAX AND CHEER YOU UP AFTER A HARD DAY

To do your best in turning out war materials, you need relaxation and recreation after the daily grind. And there's nothing like music to give you a "Lift" after a hard day. So why not start learning now. Mail the coupon for our FREE Print and Picture Sample, and illustrated Booklet. See how easy it is to learn to play your favorite instrument this quick, modern, money-saving way. Check instrument you want to play. Fill in and mail coupon today!

SUCCESSFUL 44TH YEAR

U. S. School of Music
28410 Brunswick Bldg., New York, N. Y.

I am interested in music study, particularly in the instrument checked below. Please send me your free illustrated booklet, "How to Learn Music at Home," and Free Print and Picture Sample.

Piano	Saxophone	Mandolin
Violin	Guitar	Trombone
Guitar	Newell's Guitar	Cornet
Piano Accordion	Tenor Banjo	Trumpet

Name Have You Instrument?

Address

City State

Note: If you are under 16 years of age, parent must sign this coupon. Save 2¢ Stick coupon on penny postcard.



Before I took your course I didn't know one note of music. Three months later I started to play for dances. I've been invited to many parties. "R.M., Vancouver, B.C."

It is beyond belief what benefits I have derived from your course that you sent me at such a bargain.—"W. R., Cusick, Washington."



* Actual pupils' names on request. Pictures by Professional Models.

Which of These 72 Best-Sellers Do You Want for As Low As 49¢ Each?

(Continued From Other Side)

T13. HOUSEKEEPER'S DAUGHTER—Donald Henderson. Classic. The witty, race story of beautiful Hilda and the men who pursued her. NOW 49¢

873. PLAYING THE RACES—Robert S. O'Neil. Jay Craig. A book for everyone interested in the track, describing a system which has been used successfully by its authors. NOW \$1.00

B149. HOW TO WIN AND HOLD A HUSBAND—Dorothy Dix. Famous newspaper columnist brings together the fruit of her experience with women's problems of love, marriage. ONLY \$1.00

899. KELLY—Donald Henderson Clarke. "Kelly" could have had a milk coat and sheer lingerie if she hadn't been so fanatical in certain matters. By the author of *Millie*. ONLY 19¢

198. THE ART OF SELFISHNESS—David Seabury. Don't be afraid to be selfish—you have to be! Let this famous psychologist show you definite ways to keep happy, live successfully, stay out of trouble. Formerly \$2.50—NOW \$1.00

196. STORIES BEHIND THE WORLD'S GREAT MUSIC—Sigmund Spaeth. The human side of music; little-known interesting facts about great compositions, men who created them. ONLY \$1.00

750. TOPPER—Thorne Smith. Transparent ladies in real step-las, or real ladies in transparent step-las! Just one of the problems Mr. Topper faces in this hilarious laugh-out-loud classic. Originally \$2.00—NOW ONLY \$1.00

671. THE FIRST SAINT OMNIBUS—Ludella Chartier. 12 of the most thrilling and intriguing adventures of Simon Templar, that modern Robin Hood of Crime. ONLY \$1.00

107. THE FRENCH QUARTER—Harriet Aubrey. Unflinching account of New Orleans in its notorious heyday. ONLY \$1.00

174. THE NEW BUSINESS ENCYCLOPEDIA—Edited by Henry Marshall. New, revised edition. The greatest gold-mine of business facts, rules, laws, tables, forms and ideas ever crammed into a single volume. Covers 61 business subjects: banking, law, letter writing, arithmetic, advertising, selling, etc. \$1.00

702. A YANK IN THE R. A. F.—Marion Thomas. Thrilling story of bravery and romance from which his picture was made. ONLY 49¢

34. GREAT SYMPHONIES: How to Recognize and Remember Them—Sigmund Spaeth. New, easy way to increase enjoyment of good music. ONLY \$1.00

619. WHAT MAKES SAMMY RUN?—Budd W. Schulberg. Daring and amusing best-seller about Sammy Glick who rose from errand boy to movie magnate, but couldn't help being a "heel." Orig. \$2.50—NOW ONLY \$1.00

88. NAPOLEON—Emil Ludwig. Supreme biography of the most thrilling figure in modern history. Orig. \$3.00—NOW \$1.00

1. CARE AND HANDLING OF DOGS—J. L. Leonard. D.V.M. How to select, train, mate, rear 150 breeds. 25 photos. Orig. \$2.50—NOW \$1.00

645. SHELTER—Marguerita Steen. Powerful, dramatic best-seller by author of *My Darling*. Is My Undying, of two girls and a man in the searing hours of London bombardment. Orig. \$2.50—NOW \$1.00

871. THE MORTAL STORM—Phyllis Bottome. A poignant love story, which reveals truth about life under Nazi rule. NOW 79¢

60. OPPORTUNITIES IN GOV'T EMPLOYMENT—L. J. O'Rourke. All about the Civil Service, Federal, State, Municipal; how to qualify for positions, salaries paid, etc. ONLY \$1.00

786. AMERICAN JU-JITSU—Edward L. Allen. Shows how you can render an attacker helpless—even if he has a knife, club or gun! 328 action photos. Large format, paper-bound. ONLY \$1.00

B192. DAMON RUNYON OMNIBUS—32 tales and dolls, three, twice and assorted killers. Includes "Little Miss Marker," "Princess O'Hara," "Money from Home." Formerly 49¢—NOW \$1.00

B69. SECRET AND URGENT—Fletcher Pratt. As fascinating and thrilling as a detective yarn, this exciting volume tells the history of the art of secret messages in modern warfare. Orig. \$3.75—NOW ONLY \$1.00

B93. THE EPIC OF AMERICA—James Truslow Adams. From Columbus to F. D. R.—acclaimed as "the best single volume American history in existence." Formerly 43¢—NOW \$1.00

T358. OF MICE AND MEN—John Steinbeck. Author of *Grapes of Wrath*. The extraordinary classic. ONLY 49¢

B135. THE HORSE AND BUGGY DOCTOR—Arthur E. Hertzler, M.D. Homely reminiscences of a country doctor who spent a lifetime bringing health and comfort to rural areas. ONLY \$1.00

852. THE FAMOUS ROTH MEMORY COURSE—David M. Roth. If you can remember the things you learn as you go through life, you have found a sure key to success. Here is a simple and concise method for remembering anything as long as you live. ONLY \$1.00

B49. DRY GUILLOTINE—Rene Belloc. 15 years of murder, insanity, atrocity, among the Hindus dead at Devil's Island! Formerly \$3. NOW \$1.00

175. THE SEX LIFE OF THE UNMARRIED ADULT—Ed. by Ira S. Wile, M.D. This courageous volume attacks a problem gingerly skirted by students of social questions. NOW \$1.00

124. STRATEGY IN HANDLING PEOPLE—Webb and Morgan. "K" methods used by successful men and women to sway others, win friends, skin their own ambitions. Orig. \$3.00—NOW \$1.00

46. THE STORY OF MANKIND—With 100 van Loon illustrations, color frontispiece, 16 drawings on tint panels. Animated chronology of man's progress. NOW \$1.00

50. HOW TO GET THINGS DONE—David Seabury. Don't be afraid to begin! You can do anything you want to—if you know the right method! This practical book tells you how! ONLY \$1.00

120. WORLD'S BEST JOKES. 400 pages—33 chapters, each covering different subject matter. Toasts, jokes, blunders, epigrams, comic verses, etc. ONLY \$1.00

T14. IMPATIENT VIRGIN—D. H. Clarke. Because Nature made Ruth Robbins a dazzling blonde with a zest for living, she was bound to have amorous adventures. NOW \$1.00

B82. HAPPINESS IN MARRIAGE—Margaret Sanger. Essential facts of sex relationship explained by foremost exponent of birth control. Orig. \$2.00—NOW \$1.00

B116. THE ETHICS OF SEXUAL ACTS—Rene Guenon. An intelligent discussion of the various taboos and false morality that civilization enforces. \$1.00

T47. LOUIS BERETTI—Donald Henderson Clarke. The hard-boiled story of a kid from New York's East Side who grew up to be a leader of tough gangs. ONLY 49¢

831. WHISTLE STOP—M. M. Wells. Powerful, prize-winning best-seller of lust, passion, and twisted lives in a mid-West slum town. Originally \$2.50—NOW \$1.00

184. YOUR CAREER IN BUSINESS—Walter Hewing. How to land the RIGHT JOB and hold it—escalated step-by-step by one of America's most successful executives. ONLY \$1.00

B131. CONSULTATION ROOM—Frederic Lamson, M.D. Fascinating, frank autobiography of a woman's doctor whose profession brought him into contact with women at the critical periods of their lives. NOW \$1.00

B142. HOYLE'S COMPLETE AND AUTHORITY BOOK OF GAMES. Official rule book for all card and other indoor games. Orig. \$2.50—NOW \$1.00

EXAMINE FREE AS MANY AS YOU WISH

Send No Money—Pay Nothing to Postman on Delivery—Keep Only the Ones You Want.

You may have your choice of these books for 5 DAYS FREE EXAMINATION. That is how positive we are that you will be delighted with their handsome bindings, fascinating contents. Use coupon below—encircle numbers of volumes you want. Mail coupon without money. Books will be sent on APPROVAL. Pay nothing in advance—nothing to postman.

Examine books for 5 days. Then send us amount due. However, IF—AFTER this free examination you do not wish to admit these are the biggest values you ever saw, return volumes and forget the matter. But the editions of many titles are limited. Send coupon NOW to GARDEN CITY PUBLISHING COMPANY, Dept. 1310, Garden City, N. Y.

GARDEN CITY PUBLISHING COMPANY
Dept. 1310, Garden City, N. Y.
(In Canada: 215 Victoria Street, Toronto)

Please send me the books encircled below. I will either send you, within 5 days, the current amount, plus 5¢ postage and packing charge for each volume, or I will return any books I do not want without being obligated in any way.

(Encircle numbers of books you want)

1	3	12	13	T14	T15	25	B27	B29	B31	B32	34	35	B36	37
46	T47	B49	50	58	60	B68	B69	71	B82	86	B93	T93	B99	106
107	B116	B117	120	124	126	126	B131	134	B135	137	B142	B149		
150	174	175	184	191	T192	B192	193	196	B206	B210	622	638	645	
656	671	702	710	750	758	631	850	852	871	673	888	890	912	

Name.....

Address.....

City..... State.....

☐ POSTAGE FREE—Check here if enclosing WITH coupon full amount of your order. In that case WE pay postage and packing charges. Same refund guarantee applies of course.



Which of These 72 Best-Sellers

Originally Published at Prices Up to \$6.00

Do You Want for AS LOW AS \$1 Each?

You'd never expect to get great books like these top-flight best-sellers for ONLY 49¢ . . . 79¢ . . . and \$1 EACH! Yet it's true! And many NEW, exciting titles here are being offered at these low prices for the first time! So read this latest listing carefully. Remember—these are NOT publisher's overstock. NOT books that didn't sell. Not cheaply-made books which have been reset, cut, or revised. They are all newly printed, handsomely bound editions of modern best-sellers of Fiction, Biography, Adventure, History, the Arts, Music, Science, Sports, The exact, COMPLETE texts—printed from the original, first-edition plates. Check this latest listing at once! Paper, printing, binding costs are going UP! We may not be able to offer these amazing bargains again! SEND NO MONEY! Encircle, in the coupon, the title numbers of the books you wish for FREE EXAMINATION. Read as many as you want—pay ONLY for those you keep!

Other
Bargains
at 79c
and \$1

All full library size, not little pocket volumes. Handsomely cloth bound, beautifully printed books you will be proud to own! Many are fully illustrated.

How Many of These Titles May We Send for FREE Examination?

- T93. REAP THE WILD WIND**—Thorne Smith. A historical novel of Charleston and the Florida Keys one hundred years ago. The book on which the Paramount technicolor movie is based. Never before published in book form at 49¢.
- 128. ROBERT'S THESAURUS IN DICTIONARY FORM**—Ed. by C. O. Silvester. Maxwell. Standard word book for writers, teachers, students, business men, teachers; for everyone who wants to speak and write forceful English. Now in patented dictionary form. ONLY \$1.00.
- 912. TURNABOUT**—Thorne Smith. Hilarious novel of mixed races now in an uproarious movie—but you'll find much more in the book. NOW 79¢.
- B27. SIGHT WITHOUT GLASSES**—Dr. Harold M. Poppard. A tested method of restoring and keeping normal eyesight without glasses. ONLY \$1.
- 137. SECRET AGENT OF JAPAN**—Amiets Vespa, who was compelled by the Japanese to become a spy in 1932—tells incredible true story of his experiences. Originally 45¢—NOW \$1.00.
- 58. EATING FOR VICTORY**—Ida Bailey Allen's Money Saving Cook Book. Shows how to meet rising prices, prepare delicious meals at budget cost, get necessary vitamins, etc. 1,500 recipes. ONLY \$1.00.
- 156. HOW TO HANDLE PEOPLE**—Maxwell Drake. How to talk yourself out of a tight spot, 12 ways to get action on your ideas, a tested plan to lift yourself out of the business bargain counter, etc. ONLY \$1.00.
- B31. 400 TRICKS YOU CAN DO**—Howard Thurston. Fascinating magic book of coin, dice, card and other sleight of hand tricks, vividly described by one of the world's great magicians. ONLY \$1.00.
- 650. HOW TO PLAY THE PIANO BY EAR**—P. J. Leary, radio's famous piano teacher. Spend only 30 minutes a day for five weeks with this complete, practical course—then play any tune. Large format, paper-bound. ONLY \$1.00.
- 12. VAN LOON'S GEOGRAPHY**—Hendrik Willem Van Loon. Fascinating story of our planet, with many illustrations. NOW \$1.00.
- 37. THE ART OF CONVERSATION**—Miles Wright, author of *Getting Along With People*. A few minutes a day with this simple, practical book will give you new confidence, new power. NOW \$1.00.
- 71. FUN FOR THE FAMILY**—Jerome S. Meyer. 1,600 word puzzles, party games, brain-twisters, questions, puzzles, stunts, magic tricks. NOW \$1.00.
- B66. BEST KNUIT WORKS OF OSCAR WILDE**. All his plays and poems, novel, the *Picture of Dorian Gray*; all the fairy tales. Enjoy the delicious humor of England's whitest man of letters! (Previously \$2.95). NOW \$1.00.
- B29. ASTROLOGY FOR EVERY ONE**—Evangeline Adams. Most famous name in astrology, consulted by thousands, rich and poor, now advises you from your own horoscope on love, marriage, job, money, future. ONLY \$1.00.
- B36. THE HIDDEN LINCOLN**—Emanuel Hertz. From hitherto unpublished letters, papers of his law partner Herndon, comes most revealing human, important book on Lincoln. NOW \$1.00.
- 25. CLEOPATRA**—Emil Ludwig. The world's most bewitching, glamorous figure, Cleopatra—the grand amoureuse of legend—the woman, lover, mother, warrior, queen. Formerly \$3.50, NOW \$1.00.

- 710. THE BISHOP'S JAGERS**—Thorne Smith. Hilarious adventures of normal people trapped in a nudist colony. ONLY 79¢.
- 638. THE GRAPES OF WRATH**—John Steinbeck's lusty novel—Pulitzer Prize Winner—of which Alexander Woolcott says: "As great a book as has ever come out of America." NOW \$1.00.
- 134. THE CRUISE OF THE RAIDER "WOLF"**—Ray Alexander. Gripping story of disguised German raider—exciting picture of life and action aboard the "raiderships of the Atlantic"! Or. \$2.75—NOW \$1.00.
- B99. THE WELL OF LONELINESS**—Radcliffe Hall. A poignant and beautiful novel, telling the story of a woman, masculine by nature, who develops into maturity in accordance with that nature. Formerly 35¢—NOW \$1.00.
- 35. NEW BOOK OF ETIQUETTE**—Lillian Eichler. 508 pages, fully indexed. Chapters on dinner etiquette, dance etiquette, etiquette of engagements, teas, parties, illness. NOW ONLY \$1.00.
- B117. NEW WAYS IN PHOTOGRAPHY**—Jacob Deschin. Modern, up-to-the-minute! Covers whole subject, trick photography, night indoor work, flashlight pictures, etc. Formerly \$1.50. NOW \$1.00.
- 850. NEW ART OF SPEAKING AND WRITING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**—Shervin Cody. Successfully used by hundreds of thousands; most valuable handbook of English ever written. NOW \$1.00.
- 888. RAIDERS OF THE DEEP**—Lowell Thomas. Incredible adventure of U-boat men and tales of breathless battles under the sea. NOW 79¢.
- B32. ENDURING PASSION**—Or. C. S. Slopes. Frank, sincere advice on how the marriage relationship may be maintained unimpaired through the more critical years. ONLY \$1.00.
- T192. THE O. A. CALLS IT MURDER**—Erie Stanley Gardner. Door Baby solves the murder of an unidentified minister. A whizzer by America's best-selling mystery author. The 3.
- STORY OF PHILOSOPHY**—Will Durant. America's most famous modern book—the epoch-making history of humans as great thinkers, from Socrates to John Dewey. Formerly 65¢—NOW \$1.00.
- 622. NIGHT LIFE OF THE GODS**—Thorne Smith. Side-splitting happenings when the gods and goddesses from Olympus visit Broadway. ONLY 79¢.
- 193. GAMBLERS DON'T GAMBLE**—W. Douglas and Furnas. Why professional gamblers never trust to luck. What to look for when your luck runs around. How to beat the gambler. How swindlers are exposed, other gambling secrets. Or. \$2.00—NOW \$1.00.
- 191. HAVELOCK ELLIS' LIFE AND SEX**. Frank simple discussion of facts and problems of deep interest to all men and women. Or. \$3.00—NOW \$1.00.
- 126. SPANISH SELF TAUGHT**—Dr. Richard Rosenthal. Now, with new business opportunities opening daily in Latin America, Spanish is the most important foreign language. Learn it quickly, easily in just a few minutes a day. Or. \$25.00 sold at \$8.00. ONLY \$1.00.
- 106. YOUR MIND AND HOW TO USE IT**—W. J. Kanevner. Famous founder of "Mentalism." Amazing methods of mental training proved by tests on thousands of cases. Originally \$2.95—NOW \$1.00.



MORE BARGAINS ON INSIDE COVER! LOOK AT THEM NOW!